An Explanation of

The Divine Service

For Laypeople

Biblical Worship of the One True God

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Preface

The purpose for writing this booklet is simply to explain what the different parts of the Divine Service are and what they mean. I believe that many, who were “born and raised Lutheran,” go through the service each week without understanding its rich meaning. I also believe that those who come from outside the Lutheran Church and choose to be a part of it, who do not have a Lutheran background, also have difficulty in understanding all the different parts of the service and how they relate to each other. This booklet then will give a basic **description of what the Divine Service is and what it means for us**. It will list all the different parts of it and explain each one in order to provide a deeper understanding and meaning for the layperson.

The information in this book comes from a lifetime of experience as a Lutheran, from many Lutheran pastors who have taught me over the years, from commentaries, books, and from the internet. This project has evolved and expanded beyond the original idea. Initially I intended to write a short summary of each part of the Divine Service. But as I worked on it, it became more and more detailed. Having begun only as a summary, I did not start out citing my references, although now I wish I had. I readily admit that **much of this information has been taken from other authors**. So I wish to make it clear that most of this is not my own; I do not take credit for it. In large part I have simply taken from others and put it together in what I hope is a coherent manner that proves beneficial to the reader.

1. Divine Service or Worship Service?

What is the Church Service All About?

If you asked a Christian in the United States what worship is, what response would you get? **I think that a large number of people would say that worship is "thanking and praising God"**, and I would not necessarily disagree with that simple definition. An example of this view would be praise bands leading worship services. This is very common in our day. For those churches who use praise bands and for many who don't, the worship service is all about praising God.

Now all Christians would agree that we ought to praise God. But the real question is: **Should the main focus of the church service be praising God? For Lutherans the answer is a clear, "No!"** While praising God is definitely an important part of the Lutheran church service, it is not be the main part. Why not? And if praise isn't the main part then what is?

Before we can answer these questions, we must first define the term "Divine Service." "Divine" of course refers to God. So Divine Service then is God's service to people. According to the Scriptures, people are poor, sinful beings who are helpless to do anything about their situation. Their only hope is in God, that he will rescue them. This is the way it has always been, and throughout Scripture we see again and again how God comes to his people's aid and rescues them. This has not changed; it is still true for us today. In the drama of life in this fallen world, **God always has been and always will be the lead actor and people always, at best, play minor characters.**

Based on this, Lutherans call their church service the Divine Service. In it God comes to us; he is Immanuel ("God with us"), who comes to meet with his people, to forgive them, to speak to them, to listen to them, to give them his very self, to bless them, and to go with them back into their daily lives. **In the Divine Service God takes the place of importance and gives us his gifts.** We then respond in faith. Faith says back to God what he first says to us in his word, believing it is absolutely true. Faith puts its full trust in God and responds by showing love toward people - family, friends, neighbors, strangers, and even enemies.

Because the Divine Service is God-centered and not human-centered, it is structured differently than other church services. Each part of the service begins with God, his word, his presence, and his promises and then continues with our faith response of trust, praise, and thanksgiving. **He gives his gifts; we receive his gifts and respond to them.** This is what the Lutheran church service is all about.

How does God give us his gifts in the Divine Service? In his **Word and Sacraments** God comes to us through his Holy Spirit and gives us his gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Through his Word we hear **God's word of Law and Gospel**. God's word of Law tells us of our sinfulness and need for a Savior. God word of Gospel tells us that Jesus is our Savior and that he has accomplished all that is necessary for our salvation. The Holy Spirit, working through God's word, creates and strengthens faith. Faith believes in Jesus and receives the gifts that Jesus won.

God also comes to us and gives us his gifts in the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. **Both Sacraments, instituted and commanded by Christ, connect us to Jesus' death and resurrection**, which of course is the way that Jesus paid the price for sin and won victory over our enemies, sin, death, and the devil. His victory assures all who have faith in Him of salvation and eternal life. In the Sacraments Jesus comes personally to give us his gifts. Jesus commands his followers to baptize and receive the Lord's Supper often. He commanded this so that he could come to them and give them his gracious gifts.

I think Dr. Norman Nagel captured the **essence of the Lutheran Divine Service** (*Gottesdienst)* best when he wrote in the **Introduction to Lutheran Worship**: "Our Lord speaks and we listen. His Word bestows what it says. Faith that is born from what is heard acknowledges the gifts received with eager thankfulness and praise." "Saying back to him what he has said to us, we repeat what is most true and sure. Most true and sure is his name, which he put upon us with the water of our Baptism. We are his." "The rhythm of our worship is from him to us, and then from us back to him. He gives his gifts, and together we receive and extol him. We build each other up as we speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Our Lord gives us his body to eat and his blood to drink. Finally his blessing moves us out into our calling, where his gifts have their fruition."

In Worship are We there for God or is God there for Us?

In his Word God has two messages. **He speaks Law and he speaks Gospel**. The Law is God's message of judgment against my sin. The Gospel is God's word of forgiveness of sin in Christ; It is his gracious response to my sin and guilt.

The Law differentiates. It distinguishes. It says that I have failed God and I have failed others. The Law forces me to measure myself against the standard of the Ten Commandments. And the Law has the nasty ability of making me better or worse than others.

On the other hand, **the Gospel makes us all the same**. When *I am serving* my neighbor (law), then I am different and unique because we each serve in our own way using the unique talents that we have. But **when *I am being served* by the Gospel**, then I am just like every other sinner. I am equally as sinful as you. And I am equally as forgiven as you. We are the same. We are identical. Of course my sins might be more or less profound, more or less heinous, and more or less creative than yours. But **in Christ both you and I are declared righteous, clothed and covered in the righteousness of the heavenly Bridegroom, and cleansed in the blood of the Lamb**. Sin, which makes us different and which divides, is forgiven. **Good works, which distinguish and divide us, are irrelevant when it comes to salvation**. So we are the same. The Divine Service reflects this.

The Lutheran Divine Service is Gospel oriented. In it we are all the same. Praise services are based on the good works of people, which divide. In the Divine Service God comes to us bringing and offering his gift of salvation in Christ. In Praise services God sits off passively receiving praise. **In the Divine Service God actively serves us, giving us what we need most, the forgiveness or our sins**. It has eternal implications. The Praise service might make us feel good for a while, but it contains nothing eternal. **In the Divine Service Christ is there "for you." In Praise services we are there for Christ**. What is of more comfort and benefit, God giving eternal salvation or us giving our praises to God?

The Lutheran Divine Service is Gospel based and Christ centered. **The Good News of what Jesus has done for us permeates the entire Service**. The means whereby God promises to be present and to distribute the forgiveness that Jesus won are employed in the Divine Service; they are his Word and Sacraments. Through these means, in this Service, God offers to condemned sinners what they need most, the forgiveness of their sins.

Holy Ground

While tending sheep in the desert, Moses saw a bush that was burning, but it did not burn up. It just kept on burning and burning. Not understanding this, Moses decided to go closer and see why it didn't burn up. When he began to approach the burning bush, God called out to Moses from the burning bush saying, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." **6**And he said,(G) "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." How did Moses respond to God's presence and His Word? We assume he took off his sandals as God said and he hid his face. Why was the ground at the burning bush in the middle of the desert holy? **It was holy because of God's presence at that place**. Only God is holy and anywhere where God is present is holy.

At Christian Services, when Christians come together at God's house and gather in His name, and where God's Word is preached and his Sacraments are administered properly, God is present with them. **If God is present then that church becomes holy ground**. Before Moses could come near the holy ground of the burning bush, God told him not to come near and to take off his sandals. If God is present at our services, how is it that Moses could not come near but Christians can come into the very presence of holy God? The only reason that this is possible is because of Jesus' death and resurrection. In Baptism **Christ shares his holiness with us**. We become holy in God's sight because of Christ and therefore need not be afraid. Yet we need to be in awe and show great reverence and respect because we are in the very presence of God.

So the question arises, do our Services show and reflect the fact that we are standing on holy ground? Do our Services convey the fact that God is present, that this is a holy place where holy things are happening? For the Lutheran Divine Service the answer to these questions is easy and unequivocal. Anyone who attends a Lutheran Service will know that this is not an ordinary, everyday event. What you see and hear in the Divine Service is not like anything else in daily life. From the pastors who are dressed in robes, to the congregation singing hymns, to the chanting dialog between the congregation and pastor, to the reading and preaching of God's Word, to the special meal that we eat together, **each person will know that something very special is happening here**. The furnishings of font, pulpit, altar, and cross also convey the holiness of this place.

Unfortunately, the trend in Christian churches in our day is a move away from treating church services as holy events taking place at holy places. More and more common today are sanctuaries built like movie theaters. From the outside it looks like any other building. On the inside, the building is laid out like a movie theater or a play house. There are individual, plush seats rather than pews. There are no Christian symbols or furniture. No crosses, no stained glass windows, no baptismal font, no pulpit, no lectern, and no altar. Instead there is a stage where all attention is on the praise band. There are also sophisticated sound and light systems as there would be for a Broadway production. **The message sent by these sights and sounds is**

that who ever comes to this church is going to be entertained. The message is not that God is present here at this time in this place; rather God is far off looking down and is receiving this praise music. In these services God is not given the chance to come down to be with his people. He is not given the chance to give out his gracious gifts of life and salvation through the means that he has chosen to give them (by his Word and Sacraments). There are no Sacraments where people are connected to the death and resurrection of Christ. And even if God's Word is preached, it is not Gospel (Good News) centered, but man-centered. The people are told how to live and what they can do to please God, which of course is impossible. We cannot please God by our actions, only Christ can do that for us. **In these churches Christ crucified is not front-and-center**. In these churches there is nothing holy at all.

Faith, the Highest Form of Worship

Worship raises up on a pedestal that which we consider important, that which is worthy of our love and attention. And People are by nature worshipping creatures. The only problem is that without the Gospel our worship is idolatry. We are by nature sinful and therefore we lift up and idolize those things that we deem as valuable to us. But in reality some of those things may not be so good. **By nature our worship attempts to raise ourselves before God;** we try to save ourselves. This kind of worship centers on our self and what we think is good for us.

There is an alternative to this self-centered worship. What happens when the Gospel is proclaimed is that the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens faith. And it is the job of faith to receive the gifts that God offers us. **Faith trusts that God will give us what we need and that he will give us what is best for us. Faith sees the unmerited gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation as most precious and faith sees God as most gracious. Faith gladly receives what God offers.**

So Divine Service and faith go hand in hand. God comes to us in the Divine Service and offers us gracious gifts. Faith gladly receives the gifts that God gives and is overwhelmed with thanksgiving and praise. Faith recognizes God as the highest good who is most worthy of our highest worship.

2. The Old Testament Divine Service

The Origin of the Divine Service: How God Deals with Sinners

[This section was taken from the following article in the Concordia Theological Quarterly, volume 73:2, April 2009, by Alan Ludwig: http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/LudwigLiturgicalShapeoftheOTGospel.pdf]

The First Divine Service in the Garden

After Adam and Eve had sinned, God came to Adam and Eve and spoke His word to them, both law and gospel. He spoke the law to the man and the woman. He questioned what they had done, giving them a chance to confess their sins. They admitted their sin, but they tried to blame others. Breaking God's law has consequences. God told them what the consequences would be. But God did not speak all law. The curse of the Serpent was Good News (the first Gospel) for the man and woman. God said that the Offspring of the woman would crush the Serpent. The first man and woman did not believe God's word the first time. Instead, they believed the Serpent's word and disobeyed God. Did they believe His promise this time? The answer for Adam is given in his naming of his wife. He called her Eve, which means "the mother of all living." The promised Offspring of Eve would bring life in the face of death that their sin had brought. The answer for Eve came when she had her firstborn son. She named him Cain, saying, "I have gotten the man" ("the man" - this is the way that Luther and others translated it). Eve believed she had given birth to the One who would crush the Serpent. Even though she didn't, she still believed God's word. So here we have the first Service of the Word. It consisted of:

1. God coming to sinners.
2. God speaking His word of law and gospel to the sinners.
3. The sinners admit their sin, believe the good news of the Gospel, and put their trust in the promised Offspring.

But that wasn't the end of the first Divine Service. Adam and Eve knew they had sinned because they knew they were naked. They tried to cover up their nakedness by sewing fig leaves together. God knew these flimsy leaves would not work, so He made a more permanent covering for them. He made garments of skins for them. Where did the skins come from? The text doesn't say, but skins come from animals. Apparently some of the animals that God created had to die in order to provide permanent clothes for Adam and Eve. The animal's blood was shed to cover over the shame of Adam and Eve's sin. The sacrifice of the animal's life sealed the promise that God made and signified the means by which the Offspring would crush the Serpent. It also became the prototype of future blood sacrifices. Note also that Adam and Eve had nothing to offer. They could only receive God's free gift. This then became the first Service of the Sacrament. It consisted of:

1. A substitute giving his life for another, signifying how the Offspring would crush the Serpent.
2. The shedding of blood unto death to cover sin.
3. God graciously providing the benefits of the substitutionary death to the sinners as a free gift.
4. The sinners passively receiving the gracious gift from God.

So there you have it, in Gen. 3:8 – 4:1 we have recorded the first Divine Service.

God's Divine Service for Abram

Another major event in Genesis comes in Gen. 15 where Yahweh made a covenant with Abram. Yahweh had promised Abram that he would have a son, but years had gone by and he still had no son. Common in that day for a situation like this was to adopt the son of one of your servants. This son would legally become your son and the legal heir. So Abram thought he would have a son, only it would have to come through his servant Eliezer of Damascus. But this was not what Yahweh had in mind.

Yahweh's response was a divine service. First came the Service of the Word. Yahweh came to Abram in a vision. There He spoke His word to Abram. This word was all Gospel. He told Abram that he would have his very own son and that he would have offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky. Abram's response to Yahweh's promise was that he believed Yahweh and it was counted to him as righteousness. God's word is powerful. It is proclaimed; it offers what is proclaimed; it creates faith in the hearer, enabling the hearer to believe God's promise and to trust in Him and to receive what He offers.

But that was not the end of the divine service. Next came the Service of the Sacrament, the visible Gospel. Yahweh reiterated His promise to give the land of Canaan to Abram. Then to "seal the deal," the one-way deal, Yahweh had Abram take a heifer, goat, ram, turtledove, and pigeon and cut them in half (except for the birds) and lay them out. When the sun went down, Yahweh made a covenant with Abram, telling him the future. His offspring would become servants in a foreign land for 400 years and then Yahweh would bring judgment on that nation. They would leave with great possessions and return to the Promised Land. Then Yahweh, in the form of a smoking firepot and flaming torch passed between the cut up animals and said, "To your offspring I give[c] this land …". Yahweh used physical means and shed blood to seal his covenant with Abram, assuring him that He would keep His word.

This divine service was similar to the first. God came to Abram. He spoke His word. Abram believed it. Then God cut a covenant with Abram and sealed it in blood, providing complete assurance.

The Divine Service with Abraham and Isaac

Yahweh had promised Abraham a son and He kept His word. Abraham and Sarah had a son, Isaac, in their old age. So earlier God had spoke His word of promise and the power of His word created what it promised, a son. Faith received what God's word promised. But then Yahweh would test that faith.

In that test Abraham was asked to sacrifice the only son of the promise, Isaac. In one of the greatest displays of faith in all of scripture, Abraham was about to slay his only son, when the Angel of Yahweh stopped him. Instead of having him sacrifice Isaac, Yahweh provided a ram to sacrifice. Abraham then sacrificed the ram in place of his son. Here we see that the Service of the Sacrament is based on substitutionary atonement. The ram was sacrificed in place of Isaac. Later in a twist on this story, God would not spare His only Son of the promise. He would carry it out, sacrificing His only Son in the place of all sinners.

The Divine Service of the Exodus

God's divine service to rescue Israel from slavery is described in Exodus 3 – 17. The preparation for divine service is in Ex. 3. The service of the word is in Ex. 4 – 11. And the service of the sacrament is in Ex. 12 – 17.

First (Ex. 3), Yahweh appeared to Moses at the burning bush, telling him that He had come down to deliver them from Egypt and to take them to a land of their own. He informed Moses that He had chosen to send him to Pharaoh to tell him to let the Israelites go.

Next (Ex. 4 – 11), Moses (and Aaron) went and spoke God's word to Pharaoh and Israel. He spoke God's word of law to Pharaoh commanding him to let the Israelites go. And he spoke God's word of gospel to Israel, telling them the Good News of what Yahweh was going to do. When the Israelites heard the Good News they believed and bowed their heads and worshipped. But when Pharaoh heard the law, he hardened his heart and refused to repent.

Lastly (Ex. 12 – 15) came the rescue of Israel. First the Passover lamb was slaughtered and its blood was smeared on the door frames. The shed blood of the Passover lamb saved Israel's firstborn from dying. When Egypt's firstborn died, Pharaoh ordered Israel to leave. The Israelites got as far as the Red Sea when the Egyptians changed their minds and the Egyptian army came after them. Yahweh opened up a way through the water of the Red Sea and Israel crossed. When the Egyptians tried to follow, they were drowned. After the Israelites saw what Yahweh did, they believed and in response they sang, confessing Yahweh's name and rehearsing His mighty deed of deliverance.

After their rescue, they entered into the desert (Ex. 16 -17). There God provided for them with water from a rock and manna from heaven. This He provided for 40 years until Israel entered the Promised Land.

In the divine service of the exodus we see the same elements as earlier but with a couple of twists. As before God came down to sinners who were in need of rescue. But this time, in the service of the word, He chose to work through His chosen servants, Moses and Aaron. They were his mouthpiece in speaking God's law and gospel. Each had its effect, hardening and believing. The response to the gospel was faith and worship. In the service of the sacrament, God once again used a sacrificial lamb and saved His people through its shed blood. But He also rescued His people through the waters of the Red Sea and provided for them in the desert with food and drink.

The Divine Service at Mount Sinai

Three months after leaving Egypt, Israel camped at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19). There Yahweh came to the Israelites in a thick cloud with lightning and thunder and fire. Then He spoke directly to the people (Ex. 20). He spoke His law (the Ten Commandments) and he spoke His Gospel ("I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery”). The people became afraid and asked Moses to speak with God and then tell them what God said. So God spoke the rest of His word to Moses (Ex. 21-24:3a). Moses told the people all of God’s word. The people responded by saying, "Everything the LORD has said we will do." They responded in faith. This was the service of the word at Sinai.

Next came the service of the sacrament (Ex. 24:3b-17). In this service Yahweh confirmed His covenant with Israel. They offered burnt offerings and fellowship offering to Yahweh by sacrificing young bulls. Then Moses took half the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. After the people agreed to keep the covenant with Yahweh, Moses sprinkled the other half of the blood on the people. Then Moses and Aaron and 70 elders went up the mountain into God’s presence and ate a covenant meal before Yahweh.

So once again in the service of the word, God was present with his people. At first He spoke directly to the people. But after they became afraid, He spoke to them through His chosen servant, Moses. He spoke both law and gospel to them. They responded in faith.

In the service of the sacrament, Yahweh was present with His people. The blood of the sacrifices was used to consecrate the altar and the people and a covenant meal was eaten in Yahweh’s presence.

So from Genesis and the first half of Exodus we see clearly how it that God deals with His people. He does it through the service of the word, where His word is prominent, and He does it through the service of the sacrament or the visible word. These means will be developed even further in the worship system that God designed for Israel.

	Eden	**Abram**	**Isaac**	**Exodus**	**Mt. Sinai**	**NT**
Service of the Word	Gen. 3:8 – 4:1	Gen. 15	Gen. 22	Ex. 3 - 17	Ex. 19 – 24	
God comes to sinners	God came to the garden	God came in a vision	God came and spoke to Abram	God came at burning bush	Cloud & fire on Mt. Sinai	Where 2 or 3 come together
God’s word of Law & Gospel is spoken	God spoke law & gospel to the man, woman, and serpent	God spoke gospel: promised son & numerous offspring	God spoke command to offer son & gospel to stop the sacrifice.	God had Moses/Aaron speak law to pharaoh & gospel to Israel	God spoke gospel & law to people. Moses finished speaking God’s word	God speaks His word, Law & Gospel through the pastor in the readings & sermon.
People	Adam	Abram	Abraham	The	The	The people

believe God's word and respond in faith by worshipping God.	named his wife Eve. Eve believed she had the man, the Seed who would crush the serpent.	believed God's promise and it was credited to him as righteousness.	believed that if he slayed his son, God would raise him from the dead.	Israelites believed God's word and bowed down and worshipped. Pharaoh hardened his heart.	people said they would do everything that God asked of them.	believe God's word and worship joyously with thanks & praise.
Service of the Sacrament	**Eden**	**Abram**	**Isaac**	**Exodus**	**Mt. Sinai**	**NT**
Substitute dies in the place of another. The shed blood provides atonement for sin.	Animals had to die to provide the covering for Adam & Eve.	The animals' blood is shed in the covenant ceremony.	Ram dies in place of Isaac.	Passover lamb dies in the place of Israel's firstborn.	Animals sacrificed as burnt and fellowship offerings. Blood seals the covenant.	Christ died in our place; His blood provides atonement.
Benefits of the offering are offered and received.	Adam & Eve receive clothing to cover their nakedness.	God promised to give the land of Canaan to the Israelites.	Isaac does not die; he remains alive.	Blood on the door frames saves the lives of the firstborn.	Yahweh would be Israel's God and they would be His people.	Through Sacrament God gives forgiveness, life, and salvation. We receive them by grace through faith.
God uses earthly elements as a means of grace.	God graciously covered their nakedness with animal skins	God used the animal pieces, smoking fire pot, and a flaming torch to make His promise of land to Israel.	God graciously provided a ram as a substitute.	God used Passover lambs to save the Israelites. God used water to save Israel and to drown their enemies.	God used animals, blood, and a meal in making a covenant with Israel.	God's grace comes through words, water, bread, and wine.
OT "sacrament" prefigures God's grace in the NT Sacrament.	The clothes prefigured how God would cloth believers with the white robe of Christ.	The land and Israel prefigure God's promise to give the new Israel (all believers) the heavenly promised land.	The substituted ram prefigures how Christ would be our substitute, dying in our place.	The Passover lamb represents Jesus our Passover Lamb and the water represents Baptism that now saves us.	The blood signifies the blood of Christ in the new covenant. The meal signifies the new covenant meal, the Lord's Supper.	In the Sacrament Christ gives us Himself and the benefits He won for us on the cross.

[Everything in this chapter that follows, except the last section, is based on the Concordia Commentary of Leviticus by John Kleinig.]

God's word determines the OT divine service

Almost immediately Israel broke the covenant by worshipping the golden calf (Ex. 32), showing their sinfulness. God cannot tolerate sin of any kind. **So how could holy God live among sinful people and meet with them without destroying them?** As we have seen, God does this through the divine service. In the last half of Exodus and in Leviticus God gave specific instructions on how he would do this in a regular and formal way.

In Exodus God gave instructions to Israel to build a tabernacle (tent) in which he would reside and be present with Israel. At the tabernacle Israel was to offer sacrifices to God. God required that two main sacrifices be offered every morning and every evening. Other sacrifices could also be added to these primary sacrifices. The services performed twice a day at the tabernacle we will call the OT divine service.

The basic order of the OT divine service was enacted in the **daily burnt offering** of a lamb to Yahweh (Ex. 29:38-46). (God's personal name in the OT was Yahweh. It is usually translated as 'the LORD.') And it was accompanied by the **daily grain offering**, which resulted in a meal eaten by the priests (Ex. 29:40-41). **These two sacrifices made up the OT divine service.**

> **Exodus 39 The OT Divine Service**
>
> **38**"Now this is what you shall offer on the altar:(A) two lambs a year old(B) day by day regularly. **39**One lamb you shall offer(C) in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer(D) at twilight. **40**And with the first lamb a tenth seah[a] of fine flour mingled with a fourth of a hin[b] of beaten oil, and a fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering. ***41****The other lamb you shall offer(E) at twilight, and shall offer with it a grain offering* and its drink offering, as(F) in the morning, for a(G) pleasing aroma, a food offering to the LORD. ***42****It shall be a(H) regular burnt offering* throughout your generations at the entrance of the tent of meeting before the LORD,(I) where I will meet with you, to speak to you there. **43**There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be(J) sanctified by my glory. **44**I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar.(K) Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate to serve me as priests. **45**(L) I will dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. **46**And they shall know that(M) I am the LORD their

God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

There were three stages to the OT divine service. First there was **the rite of blood atonement** (Lev. 1:4). The blood of the lamb was dashed against the sides of the altar for burnt offering (Lev. 1:5, 11). It purified the altar and the priests. It made it possible to enter the Holy Place to burn incense on the altar of incense (Ex. 30:7-8) and to approach the altar to layout the burnt offering without desecrating Yahweh's holiness.

Lev. 1 Blood Atonement

4(A) He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be(B) accepted for him(C) *to make atonement for him*. **5**Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood(D) and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. …
11(A) and he shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD, and Aaron's sons *the priests shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar*.

Second, the lamb and the Grain Offering were "sent up in smoke" as "an aroma pleasing to Yahweh" (Ex. 29:41; Lev. 1:8-9, 12-13). **Yahweh (present in the form of fire) met with his people at the altar for burnt offering and gave them access to his grace** (Ex. 29:42-43) so they could present petitions to him. He came to accept them (Lev. 1:3) and to bless them (Ex. 20:24). By Theophany (appearance by God) in fire and smoke he consecrated and sanctified (made holy) the tabernacle/temple, altar, and priests (Ex. 29: 43-44; Lev. 9:4, 6, 23-24).

Lev. 1:8-9 Whole Burnt Offering

8And Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; **9**but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And *the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as*(A) *a burnt offering*, a food offering[a] with a(B) pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Ex. 29:42-43 Yahweh Meets with Israel at the Altar

42It shall be a[H] regular burnt offering throughout your generations at the entrance of the *tent of meeting before the LORD,*[I] *where I will meet with you, to speak to you there.* **43***There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be*[J] *sanctified by my glory*.

Last, the priests ate bread made from the flour from the public grain offering (Lev. 6:14-18). In this meal Yahweh was the host and the priests were his guests. The food they ate was most holy food because a token portion had been burned on the altar coming into contact with his holy presence. **In this meal Yahweh shared his holiness with the priests** (Lev. 6:18).

Lev. 6 In the Grain Offering God Provides a Holy Meal

16And[C] the rest of it Aaron and his sons shall eat. It shall be eaten unleavened[D] in a holy place. In the court of the tent of meeting they shall eat it. **17**[E] It shall not be baked with leaven.[F] *I have given it as their portion of my food offerings.*[G] *It is a thing most holy*, like the sin offering and the guilt offering. **18**Every male among the children of Aaron may eat of it, as decreed forever throughout your generations, from the LORD's food offerings. Whatever touches them shall become holy."

So in the divine service of the OT **the priests** (as representatives of the people, mediators) **were cleansed in atonement, met with Yahweh in the burnt offering, and received a sacred meal in the grain offering**.

Other offerings could be made in addition to the primary offerings and the pattern of the daily burnt/grain offerings was imposed on the other offerings. Each included 1) atonement, 2) sending some part of the sacrifice up in smoke on the altar for burnt offering, and 3) culminated in a sacred meal.

In the meal Yahweh was the host and the Israelites were his guests. **Yahweh provided holy food from his altar/table**. The priests ate the most holy food: the showbread, bread from grain offerings as well as meat from the sin and guilt offerings. They and their families ate holy meat from the peace offerings. The Israelites ate holy food from their peace offerings as well as holy bread from the grain offerings.

This was the OT divine service as directed by God's word.

The OT Divine Service is the Pattern for the NT Divine Service

As we said above the pattern that God set for worship of him was: 1) blood atonement, 2) sending a sacrifice up in smoke, and 3) a sacred meal. This was true for the regular daily offerings and it was true for any additional offerings. **This same pattern holds true for our worship of God today.** But you may ask, how is this true today when we don't kill animals and burn sacrifices on an altar?

This is true because all OT sacrifices pointed forward to the one great sacrifice that Jesus made. **1)** Jesus, as our sacrifice, **shed his blood to make atonement** for us and for the whole world. **2) Jesus, as our sacrifice was sacrificed on the altar of the cross**. Like the lamb giving up its life in place of sinful Israel, Jesus took our place and the place of all sinful humanity. Taking the punishment that we deserved on himself, he willing gave up his life for us. Jesus' sacrifice of himself pleased God the Father, for that was the purpose for which he was sent. His sacrifice won forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Jesus now comes to us in person in the Divine Service and **distributes these gifts that he won, the results of his sacrifice**. The gifts come to us through his crucified and risen body and blood. God's word informs us of Jesus' death and resurrection; Holy Baptism connects us to Christ's death and resurrection; and **3)** in **Holy Communion** Christ gives us his sacrificed body and blood to eat and drink for our nourishment. **This is our sacred and holy meal provided by God.**

> **Heb. 9 - OT Sacrifices are a Copy and Shadow of Christ's NT Sacrifice**
> **23**Thus it was necessary for(AU) the *copies of the heavenly things* to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. **24**For Christ has entered, not into holy places(AV) made with hands, which are *copies of the true things*, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God(AW) on our behalf.
> **…**
>
> **Heb. 10 - Christ's Sacrifice Once for All**
> **1**For since the law has but(BJ) a shadow(BK) of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities,(BL) it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. **2**Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? **3**But(BM) in these sacrifices(BN) there is a reminder of sins every year. **4**For(BO) it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
> …
>
> **12**But when Christ[j] had offered *for all time a single sacrifice for sins*, he(BZ) sat down at the right hand of God, **13**waiting from that time(CA) until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. **14**For by *a single offering*(CB) he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

In the Divine Service atonement is not made; no sacrifice is made; no blood is shed. This is because Jesus shed his blood once and for all on the cross. His sacrifice was effective and need not be repeated. Through it he won forgiveness of sins for all people for all times. He shed his blood and atonement was made. No more blood needs to be shed; no more sacrifices need to be made. **In the Divine Service the benefits of Jesus' sacrifice are distributed**. In the Divine Service Jesus gives us his gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

The result of a sacrifice that was burned on the altar in the OT was a God-pleasing, sweet-smelling smoke and aroma. **The result of Jesus' sacrifice is forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation.** The result of Jesus' sacrifice is for all people for all times. The result of Jesus' sacrifice is that the righteous requirements of a just God that sin must be punished have been fulfilled. The result of Jesus' sacrifice is Good News (Gospel) for all people, since all people sin and fall short of the glory of God. **It is God's word that tells us that we fall short, but it is also God's word that tells us the Good News of what Jesus has done for us through his sacrifice**. Therefore one high point of the Divine Service is the Service of the Word. In it, God's word is read in the OT, epistle, and gospel readings, is confessed in the creed, is sung in the hymn of the day, and is expounded upon in the sermon. **In the Service of the Word God proclaims and offers to us the Good News of our salvation won by Jesus.** So the **Service of the Word corresponds to the results of the OT whole burnt offering**, the first sacrifice of the OT divine service which was offered every morning and every evening every day.

The second part of the OT divine service was the grain offering. A portion of the grain being offered was burned on the altar. The rest of it was used for a meal, a holy meal eaten by the priests. In the Divine Service **we also eat a holy meal in Holy Communion**. In the NT all Christians are members of the priesthood of all believers and therefore are eligible to eat the holy meal of the Lord's Supper. This part of the service is called the Service of the Sacrament (a sacrament is where God comes to us and gives us his gifts). In the OT God provided holy food to his servants the priests through the grain offering. **In the NT God also provides holy food to his servants (all baptized Christians) through the sacrificed holy body and holy blood of Jesus.**

OT Divine Service

Whole Burnt Offering

- Blood Atonement
- Lamb burned on the altar
- The priests eat the holy food in God's presence
- Burnt lamb results in God-pleasing smoke and aroma

Grain Offering

- Portion of grain was burned on altar making all grain holy
- The holy grain was made into holy food

NT Divine Service

Jesus Offered Himself on the Cross

- Jesus shed his blood to atone for the sins of the world
- Jesus died on the cross
- The results of Jesus' sacrifice is proclaimed and offered in God's Word

Jesus' Sacrifice Provides a Holy Meal

- As God Jesus was holy

- Jesus' holy body and blood become holy food
- Christians eat holy food in God's presence

Synagogue Worship Develops

The divine service that was performed at the Tabernacle continued at the Temple after Solomon built it. The divine service continued at the temple until Israel was defeated by the Babylonians. When that happened most of the people of Israel were taken into exile and the temple was destroyed. How could Israel worship when they were scattered and had no central place for worship? It is believed by some that the beginnings of synagogues began at this time. So while in exile, the Israelites built synagogues, local places of worship. **Each week on the Sabbath the Israelites would go to their local synagogue to hear God's word read and explained by their rabbi** (teacher). Since they no longer had a temple where sacrifices could be made, they only had God's word (the OT). And so they studied it, learned that they had broken God's covenant with them, and vowed that it would never happen again.

Eventually God arranged through Persian king Cyrus for a remnant of Israel to return. When they did, they rebuilt the temple and began the regular morning and evening sacrifices of the divine service at the rebuilt temple. During the 400 years between the old and new testaments, these local synagogues (churches) continued to develop both abroad and also in the Promised Land. **Worship at both the synagogues and at the temple coexisted during this time.** In the next chapter we will see if Jesus worshipped at the synagogues, at the temple, or at both.

3. The NT Framework

Worship at the Beginning of the NT

What forms of worship were used at the time of the beginning of the NT? In the beginning of the gospels of Matthew and Luke are mentioned **both the synagogue and the temple.** The services at the temple were like that of the OT. Sacrifices were made every morning and every evening every day. The main focus of Services at the synagogue was God's word, the Torah (the five books of Moses) and the Prophets (the rest of the OT). In it God's word was read and explained.

> **Mt. 2 – Priests Equate to Temple; Scribes Equate to Synagogue**
> 3When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; 4and assembling all the *chief priests and scribes* of the people, he inquired of them where(AO) the Christ was to be born.
>
> **Mt. 4 – Jesus Went Around and Taught in Synagogues**
> 23(BU) And he went throughout all Galilee,(BV) teaching in their *synagogues* and …
>
> **Luke 1 – Zechariah Serves as Priest in the Temple**
> 8Now(T) while he was serving as *priest* before God when(U) his division was on duty, 9according to the custom of the *priesthood*, he was chosen by lot(V) *to enter*(W) *the temple* of the Lord and burn incense.
>
> **Luke 2 – The Sacrifice for the Firstborn at the Temple in Jerusalem**
> 22And(FZ) when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up *to Jerusalem*(GA) to present him to the Lord 23(as it is written in(GB) the Law of the Lord,(GC) "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") 24and to offer *a sacrifice* according to what is said in(GD) the Law of the Lord,(GE) "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."
>
> **Luke 2 – Anna in the Temple**
> 37…She did not depart from *the temple*,(GZ) worshiping with(HA) fasting and prayer night and day.

These were the forms of worship used, but **were they legitimate?** Did Jesus accept these forms of worship? The gospels are filled with passages which tell us that every Saturday **Jesus went to a synagogue** and taught the people. And when Jesus was in Jerusalem he taught at the temple daily. When he healed lepers **he told them to go show themselves to the priests and offer sacrifices**. Although Jesus

accepted these forms of worship, he knew that they were temporary and pointed to something greater. **Jesus himself was God's best and final Word. Jesus himself was the new Temple.** Only in him can one find true atonement, reconciliation, and the very presence of God.

Mt. 4 – Jesus Teaches at the Synagogues

23(BU) And he went throughout all Galilee,(BV) teaching in their *synagogues* and …

Mk. 1 – Jesus Tells Healed Leper to Go Offer Sacrifices

44"See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to *the priest and offer the sacrifices* that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."

Mt. 26 – During Holy Week Jesus Taught at the Temple Daily

55At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in *the temple courts* teaching, and you did not arrest me.

Mt. 21 – Jesus Considers the Temple as God's House of Prayer

13"It is written," he said to them," 'My house will be called a *house of prayer*,'[a] but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'[b]"

John 2 – Jesus is the New Temple

19Jesus answered them, "Destroy *this temple*, and I will raise it again in three days."
20The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build *this temple*, and you are going to raise it in three days?" 21But *the temple he had spoken of was his body*.

John 1 – Jesus is the Word that Became Flesh

1(A) In the beginning was(B) the Word, and(C) the Word was with God, and(D) *the Word was God*. … 14And(Z) *the Word*(AA) *became flesh* and(AB) dwelt among us,(AC) and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of(AD) grace and(AE) truth.

Jesus' Ministry Defines Christian Worship as Divine Service

[This section is based on the Concordia Commentary Luke by Arthur A Just]

Teaching and Miracles

Jesus' ministry took the OT types of worship and transformed them, for they were but a shadow of the real thing. Jesus' ministry began with his baptism where he was acknowledged by the Father, anointed by the Spirit, and where he took the sins of the world on himself. After his baptism, in the synagogue of his hometown

of Nazareth, Jesus was a guest preacher. There Jesus read from the book of Isaiah and taught that this passage was speaking about him (Lk 4:21). He was the one who had been anointed and who would bring Good News, liberty, and sight (Lk 4:18-19) to those imprisoned and blinded by sin. The next Sabbath Jesus taught in the Capernaum synagogue and everyone was amazed at his teaching (Lk 4:31-32). At this synagogue was a man who was possessed with an unclean spirit. Jesus ordered that the demon come out of the man and he did (Lk 4:35). After Jesus left the synagogue, he went to Peter's house and healed Peter's mother-in-law and all those who were sick in the region (Lk 4:38-41).

This demonstrates a pattern of Jesus' ministry: he taught the Good News of God's Word and he performed miracles. He went from synagogue to synagogue preaching the Good News (Lk 4:43-44) and as he did he healed people of their diseases and cast out demons. So throughout his ministry: **1) Jesus was physically present with people; 2) he taught them; and 3) he performed miracles for them.** After Jesus died, rose, and ascended into heaven, his ministry of teaching and miracles continued, only in a different manner. **Where two or three are gathered in his name, 1) Jesus is present and 2) he continues to teach and 3) performs miracles.** This is his ongoing ministry. Now he teaches and performs miracles through his called and ordained servants, pastors. Even though it is the pastor who reads God's Word and preaches the Gospel, it is really Jesus who teaches us. Even though the pastor speaks the words of institution and administers the Sacrament, it is Jesus who is present feeding us with his body and blood in, with, and under bread and wine. In a miraculous way we receive Jesus' body with the bread and Jesus' blood with the wine.

Heb. 10 – OT Sacrifices are a Shadow of Jesus' Sacrifice

[1]*The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—*
not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the
same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect
those who draw near to worship.

Lk 4 – The Beginning of Jesus' Teaching and Miracle Ministry

[20]Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and
sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened
on him, [21]and *he began by saying to them*, "Today this scripture
is fulfilled in your hearing." … [30]But he walked right through the
crowd and went on his way.

Lk 4 – Jesus Teaches and Expels a Demon

[31]Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on
the Sabbath began to *teach the people*. [32]They were amazed at
his teaching, because his message had authority. … [35]"Be quiet!"
Jesus said sternly. *"Come out of him!"* Then the demon threw the
man down before them all and came out without injuring him.

Lk 4 – Jesus Went from Synagogue to Synagogue Preaching

[43]but he said to them, [L] "I must[M] preach the good news of the
kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for

this purpose." 44*And he was preaching*(N) *in the synagogues of Judea.*[a]

Teaching and Eating

[This section is based on the Concordia Commentary Luke by Arthur A Just]

In his ministry Jesus used the meal setting to teach about himself and his kingdom. There were several important features of Jesus' meals. In his meals Jesus ate and drank with "sinners." Since Jesus was God, each of Jesus' meals was a meal with God. At each meal Jesus taught about the kingdom and forgiveness and who he was. At each meal, repentant sinners benefited from his presence and teaching. Chief examples of Jesus' teaching and eating from Luke are 5:27-39; 9:10-17; 14:1-24; 15:1-2, 11-32; 19:1-10; 22:14-38; 24:13-35.

Luke's final word on table fellowship is the meal at Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35). On the way to Emmaus, 1) Jesus joined two disciples as they walked and 2) taught them about himself from the OT as they made their way toward Emmaus. 3) At the meal in Emmaus, Jesus was first recognized as the crucified and risen Lord. **This teaching and eating set the pattern for Christian worship** as Jesus, after his death and resurrection, continued **his practice of teaching and eating with his disciples at the table.** Acts 2:42 confirms that from the beginning the church followed the divine pattern through worship that included 2) **teaching and** 3) **the celebration of the Lord's Supper**.

So Lutherans follow the pattern set forth in the OT and in Jesus' ministry of table fellowship. 2) Lutherans **allow Jesus to teach them** through his Word in the readings and the sermon. 3) And Lutherans **allow Jesus to serve them** in the Lord's Supper, where 1) **Jesus is once again present** in bodily form bestowing his gifts of forgiveness and peace to repentant sinners. The Divine Service then is a most appropriate name for Lutheran worship. Lutherans gladly **follow Jesus' instruction and gladly receive the gifts he offers.** And, having received Jesus and his gifts, Lutherans are then motivated to worship and praise God for his grace and to serve him through a life of service to others.

Lk 9 – Jesus Teaches and Feeds the Five Thousand

11When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he(C) welcomed them and(D) *spoke to them of the kingdom of God* and cured those who had need of healing. … 17*And they all ate* and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

Lk 14 – Jesus Teaches at a Sabbath Evening Meal

1One Sabbath,(A) when he went to *dine* at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were(B) watching him carefully. … 7Now he *told a parable* to those who were invited …

Acts 2 – Jesus' Teaching and Eating Ministry Continues After His Ascension

42And(A) they devoted themselves to the *apostles'*(B) *teaching* and the(C) fellowship, to(D) *the breaking of bread* and the prayers.

Christian Worship After Jesus' Ascension

After the ascension of Jesus, the writer of Hebrews gives a seven-fold description of Christian worship (Heb. 12:22-24). **First** he describes where we worship, "the heavenly Jerusalem." When we worship we enter heaven; we enter into God's holy domain. How do we this? We enter the heavenly Holy of Holies through the curtain which is the flesh and blood of Jesus. **Jesus, our great High Priest, ushers us into God's holy presence** through his holy blood that has cleansed us of all our sins (Heb. 10:19-22).

Second, worship is a "festal gathering" in which we join "**innumerable angels**". The angels in heaven are constantly praising God and so in the Divine Service **we join them in their praise**, specifically in *the Sanctus* (Is. 6), in *the Gloria* (Lk. 2), and in *This is the Feast* (Rev. 5).

Third, we worship with all those whose names have been "enrolled in heaven." This includes **all believers around the world.** This is world-wide worship; this is the real mega-church.

Fourth, we worship before "God, the judge of all." Coming into the presence of the Judge could be terrifying for us since we are sinners. But because of Jesus, God has pardoned us, justified us, and absolved us of our sins. Therefore we are not afraid to **come before the Judge** because we already know that **we will receive a favorable verdict for Jesus' sake.**

Fifth, we come before "the righteous made perfect." These are **past believers who have died in Christ** and are now in heaven. **They too worship with us**. They have finished the race and now cheer us on from heaven that we might finish the race and join them.

Sixth, we come before "Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant." **Jesus is at the heart of Christian worship.** He cleanses the church of its sin, takes it as his bride, and serves a lavish, festive, and everlasting wedding feast. We receive a foretaste of the eternal feast in the Lord's Supper in the Divine Service.

And **seventh**, we come to be "sprinkled" with his "blood." In the OT, blood was used to purify and make things and people holy. In the NT it is Christ's blood that purifies us from all sin. In the **Lord's Supper** we receive the very blood of Christ. **With his blood our hearts are sprinkled**, purifying us and making us holy, giving us a clear conscience before God.

To summarize then, in the Divine Service, while still on earth, we enter into heaven itself, into God's holy presence. And wherever God is, he is surrounded by angels who are praising him. So we join the angels in praising God. We also join the saints around the world and the saints who have gone before us to heaven in praising God. We come before God, the Judge, as sinners who have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus. We come as the bride of Christ and receive a foretaste of the eternal wedding feast to come.

Heb. 12 – Christian Worship in the Early Church

22 But you have come to(AI) Mount Zion and to the city of the living
God,(AJ) the heavenly Jerusalem, and to(AK) innumerable angels in
festal gathering, 23 and to(AL) the assembly[a] of the firstborn who
are(AM) enrolled in heaven, and to(AN) God, the judge of all, and to
the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus,(AO) the
mediator of a new covenant, and to(AP) the sprinkled blood(AQ) that
speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Heb 10 – Jesus is The New Way Into God's Presence and The Great High Priest

19 (V) Therefore, brothers,[c] since we have confidence to enter(W) the
holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by(X) the new and living way
that he opened for us through(Y) the curtain, that is, through his
flesh, 21 and since we have(Z) a great priest over the house of God,
22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with
our hearts(AA) sprinkled clean(AB) from an evil conscience and our
bodies(AC) washed with pure water.

Worship in Heaven

In the Revelation of John, God gave the apostle John a glimpse into heaven. He could see and was told what would happen and what awaited Christians and the world. One aspect that John saw was worship in heaven. What does worship consist of in heaven?

In chapters 4, 5, and 7 (among other chapters as well) of Revelation John saw heaven's worship service. Those involved in the service are as follows. He saw **God (the Father)** in all his majesty sitting on a throne. Next to God was **the Lamb (Jesus)** who was slain but was now alive and has ransomed the people of God. Around the throne were **the OT and NT saints** that have died and gone to heaven (24 elders = 12 tribes of OT Israel + 12 NT disciples of Christ). These saints are described as a multitude from every nation and language dressed in white robes made white in the blood of the Lamb. Before the throne was **the Holy Spirit** (7 spirits of God). And also before the throne was a sea of glass. The turbulent seas of evil and chaos have been stilled by Jesus' victory over evil. Around the throne of God was **a special order of angels** charged with praising God and leading worship. These four living creatures represent all of God's creation (4 living creatures = 4 winds = 4 corners of earth) which continuously praises God day and night. They are heaven's choirmasters.

In Rev. 4 **God the Father is worshipped.** The entire people of God respond to the refrain 'Holy, holy, holy' by falling down from their thrones and casting their crowns before God's throne (Christ has shared his victory with them but they recognize their place before God) and worshipping God as the Creator of all things, giving him all glory and honor.

In Rev. 5, **not only is the Father worshipped, but so also is the Lamb (Jesus).** In chapter 5 the victorious Lamb is coronated, enthroned, and worshipped. Like the Father, Jesus (the Lamb) is surrounded by **angels** and all of the **Old and New Testament believers**. He has all power and is **filled with the Holy Spirit**. All those

surrounding him fall down before him and give him the same honor, glory, and praise as they gave to the Father. He is worthy of such praise they sing because he shed his blood to buy people back to make them a kingdom of priests who serve God. Then thousands of angels encircle the throne, creation, and all believers and join in the great hymn of praise to Jesus. Finally **all creatures in heaven and earth** sing praise to God (the Father) and to the Lamb.

In chapter 7 another group joins the worship service. This group is a multitude from every nation who wears white robes and holds palm branches. They declare that salvation belongs to God and the Lamb. This group is **the church on earth**. They have garments of righteousness (Jesus' righteousness given in Baptism) and they welcome their King who will save them. They serve God and God provides for them and shepherds them on their journey to heaven.

There is much more to Christian worship than meets the eye. **When we worship we are joining the worship of heaven.** We join in the worship of the multitude of believers from every nation who are already in heaven. We join myriads of angels who are in God's presence in heaven. We join all Christians from around the world in every nation who believe and trust in the Triune God and his plan of salvation. It has been said that when we worship we have one foot on earth and one foot in heaven. We are physically still here on earth, but we join the heavenly worship service and by the power of the Holy Spirit praise God and the Lamb for creating us and saving us. We worship the Triune God through the Son because it is the Son who reconciled us and brought us back to a relationship with God. So Jesus is the main focus of our service. We hear of him in Law and Gospel and we receive him and his gift of salvation in the Supper. Jesus is proclaimed in every part of the Liturgy.

Rev 4 – God the Creator is Worshipped

8 And the four living creatures,(R) each of them with six wings,
are(S) full of eyes all around and within, and(T) day and night they
never cease to say,

(U) "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
(V) who was and is and is to come!"

9 And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and
thanks to him who is seated on the throne,(W) who lives forever
and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders(X) fall down before him who is
seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and
ever. They cast(Y) their crowns before the throne, saying,
11(Z) "Worthy are you, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for(AA) you created all things,
and(AB) by your will they existed and were created."

Rev 5 – The Victorious Lamb is Worshipped Like and With the Father

9And they sang(N) a new song, saying,

"Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for(O) you were slain, and by your blood(P) you ransomed people for God
from(Q) every tribe and language and people and nation,
10and you have made them(R) a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth."

11Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering(S) myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12saying with a loud voice,(T) "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" 13And I heard(U) every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" 14And the four living creatures(V) said, "Amen!" and the elders(W) fell down and worshiped.

Rev 7 – The Church on Earth Joins in Heavenly Worship

9After this I looked, and behold,(H) a great multitude that no one could number,(I) from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, (J) clothed in white robes, with(K) palm branches in their hands, 10and crying out with a loud voice,(L) "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and(M) the four living creatures, and they(N) fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12(O) saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

13Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, (P) clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" 14I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of(Q) the great tribulation.(R) They have washed their robes and(S) made them white(T) in the blood of the Lamb.
15"Therefore they are before the throne of God,
and(U) serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne(V) will shelter them with his

presence.
16 (W) They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;
(X) the sun shall not strike them,
nor any scorching heat.
17 For the Lamb in the midst of the throne (Y) will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of (Z) living water,
and (AA) God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

4. The Order and Benefits of the Divine Service

The Order of the Divine Service

In the Divine Service we follow an order of service. The order of service is called the liturgy. Why have this order? Well, think about people's lives. People have work schedules. Students have class schedules. Traffic laws provide order on the streets. There is order provided by 24 hour days, 7 day weeks, and 52 week years. **People function much better when their lives are ordered**, where there are regular routines or rules to follow. So it is quite natural for us to have an order to our worship services.

God is a God of order as well. When God created the universe, he created it with order. In time, space, and purpose everything was in order. The opposite of order is chaos. Chaos exists because sin has interrupted and corrupted the order God created. Yet **God was determined to restore order** to his creation. And God did this when he sent his one and only Son into this chaotic, sinful world in order to take away sin and its effects. Through his death and resurrection Jesus took away our sin and won eternal life and salvation and restored order. God then gives out as free gifts everything Jesus won. He does this in an orderly way in the Divine Service.

Since God is a God of order and is restoring order through Jesus, it is appropriate that **the Divine Service be ordered around the Triune God and specifically on God the Son**, Jesus and his work of salvation. As we have seen in previous chapters, the general order of the Service was laid out in the OT divine service. It provided a pattern to follow and it pointed forward to Jesus and the gifts that he would provide. We have also seen that in the NT the followers of Jesus continued this pattern as they regularly met weekly to hear God's word and receive his Supper.

So today we follow an order of service that was established in the Old and New Testaments. **The order of the Divine Service consists of three main parts**: the Preparation, the Service of the Word, and the Service of the Sacrament. **First, we prepare for the Divine Service.** As we come into God's holy presence to receive his Word and Sacraments, to receive his gifts, **we recognize and confess our sinful condition** and need for forgiveness. The pastor, as God's mouth-piece, **assures us that we have been forgiven for Jesus' sake** and can stand before God without fear.

Second, is the Service of the Word. Here God's holy Word is read. His Word is read from both the OT and NT. His Word of Law and Gospel is read. **The ultimate focus of his Word is on Jesus.** The OT looked forward to the coming Christ. The NT reveals that Jesus is the Promised One who is the fulfillment of all of God's promises. God's Word is also preached by the pastor, as he expounds upon its meaning and application to our lives. God's Word is also sung in the Hymn of the Day and confessed in Creed. It is through God's Word that God creates and maintains faith in us to receive Jesus and the gifts he won for us.

Third, is the Service of the Sacrament. Jesus commanded that we receive the Sacrament often. In the Sacrament Jesus comes to us and serves us a heavenly meal.

The meal consists of his holy body and his holy blood, his crucified and risen body and blood, the body and blood he sacrificed for the forgiveness of our sins. **In this meal he gives us himself and the forgiveness he won.** In this meal faith is nourished and faith grabs a hold of Jesus and his wonderful gifts.

The Benefits of Having Order in the Divine Service

As we said, the order of service that we follow is usually called the liturgy. From week to week the major parts of the liturgy are the same. People work well with order. They know what to expect. They feel comfortable. It allows them to concentrate on what's important. Within the three major parts of the liturgy, some individual parts stay the same from week to week, but some of them also vary. The parts that vary are based on the theme of the day and the time of the church year. This provides some amount of flexibility to the service. An example of this is the Bible readings. Every week we hear readings from the OT, the NT gospels, and an epistle. But we don't read the same Bible verses each week. Each week the readings change based on the theme of the day. So **following a liturgy provides the order we need and the framework that our worship is built on and yet there is enough flexibility so that different themes can be addressed.**

Using a liturgy or an order of service provides many other benefits. For anyone who comes to the Divine Service it should be abundantly clear that Lutherans believe that there is only one true living God and that he is the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. References are constantly made to the Triune God through out all parts of the Service. We have many distractions in our lives and having **the liturgy puts our focus back on the One who created us, redeemed us, and made us his own**.

It will also be clear that the Divine Service is all about Jesus. God the Father works through his Son, Jesus, and so we look only to Jesus for God's love. God makes himself known through the Son. Therefore the order of service focuses us on Jesus. In the Preparation we receive the forgiveness that Jesus won. In the Service of the Word we hear the Good News about Jesus through which the Holy Spirit works to create and strengthen faith. In the Service of the Sacrament we receive the very body and blood of Christ. Through it we are nourished in our faith. **Keeping our focus on Jesus is all important. The liturgy does that very well.**

Another benefit of the liturgy is its Gospel focus. In the Divine Service we hear God's Word, both the Law and the Gospel, our need for a savior and that Jesus is our Savior. As sinners we need to hear the Law which shows us our sins. As sinners we need to hear the Gospel, the Good News of what Jesus has done for us. **But it is the Gospel that dominates the Service, for it is through Jesus that God brings us to himself, forgives us, and lives in us.** The Gospel is heard in Word, song, creed, and prayer throughout the entire service. The Holy Spirit uses the Gospel to create faith, to heal us from sin inflicted wounds, and to strengthen our spiritual muscles so that we can withstand the assaults of our enemies.

Another benefit is that the liturgy is a great teacher. It teaches the basics of the Christian faith. Every Sunday we hear of our sinfulness and need for repentance. Every Sunday we hear that our sin is forgiven because of Jesus. We learn of the importance of God's Word as it creates us, builds us up, and shapes us as Christians. We learn that Christians respond to God's grace by praising and thanking God with their entire being for all he has done and by believing his Word. We learn that as God's children God is present with us in Christ as we go through life. **The liturgy's teaching provides us with a solid foundation and then builds on it.**

Another focus of the liturgy is the presence of God the Divine Service. Jesus is present to lead us into our worship of God the Father. The presence of the Triune God is invoked in the invocation. God speaks his forgiveness of our sins through the pastor in the absolution. God speaks to us through the pastor and readers of the Scriptures and the sermon. God is present to hear and answer our prayers. Jesus is present to serve us the Holy Meal and he is present to be the Holy Meal. In the benediction God is present to bless us as we return to our normal life. The Holy Spirit is present in Word and Sacraments using the Gospel to sustain and strengthen faith in his people. In the Divine Service the Triune God is present to bless us.

The last benefit of the liturgy is that it keeps us focused on God's actions for us. You might think that this is obvious, that all worship focuses on God. This is the way that it should be, but in so many cases today it is not. Many Christian worship services focus on the Christian and what they do and how they do it. While this is important, much more important is what God does for us. **Without God's saving actions for us, what we do is insignificant.** The Divine Service focuses us on the fact that God came to earth as a human being; he lived life facing all the troubles and temptations that we face; he lived a perfect life for us; he suffered and died in our place, paying the price for us; he rose from the dead, winning victory for us; he ascended into heaven where he now rules and prepares a place for us; he sends his Holy Spirit to create faith in us through the means of his Word and Sacraments; and he will return again one day and bring all who believe in him to heaven to live with him in peace and harmony forever. God's action for us is what is important and this is what the liturgy focuses us on.

Why We Use the Historic Liturgy

[This section comes directly from Pastor Cwirla's blog at: http://blog.higherthings.org/wcwirla/article/4144.html]

Here is a list that one pastor compiled answering the question, "Why do we worship according to the western, catholic (universal) liturgy?"

1. it shows our historic roots. Some parts of the liturgy go back to the apostolic period. Even the apostolic church did not start with a blank liturgical slate but adapted and reformed the liturgies of the synagogue and the Sabbath. The western mass shows our western catholic roots, of which we as Lutherans are not ashamed. (I'd rather be confused with a Roman Catholic than anything else.) We're not the first Christians to walk the face of the planet, nor, should Jesus tarry, will we be the last. **The race of faith is a relay race, one generation handing on ("traditioning") to the next the faith once delivered to the saints.** The historic liturgy underscores and highlights this fact. It is also "traditionable," that is, it can be handed on.

2. It serves as a distinguishing mark. The liturgy distinguishes us from those who do not believe, teach, and confess the same as we do. **What we believe determines how we worship, and how we worship confesses what we believe.**

3. **It is both Theocentric and Christocentric**. From the invocation of the Triune Name in remembrance of Baptism to the three-fold benediction at the end, the liturgy is focused on the activity of the Triune God centered in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. Worship is not primarily about "me" or "we" but about God in Christ reconciling the world to HImself and my baptismal inclusion in His saving work.

4. It teaches. **The liturgy teaches the whole counsel of God** - creation, redemption, sanctification, Christ's incarnation, passion, resurrection, and reign, the Spirit's outpouring and the new life of faith. Every liturgical year cycles through these themes so that the hearer receives the "whole counsel of God" on a regular basis.

5. **It is transcultural.** One of the greatest experiences of my worship life was to be in the Divine Service in Siberia with the Siberian Lutheran Church. Though I spoke only a smattering of Russian, I knew enough to recognize the liturgy, know what was being said (except for the sermon, which was translated), and be able to participate knowledgeably across language and cultural barriers. I also had the same experience with our Chinese mission congregation.

6. It is repetitive in a good way. Repetition is, after all, the mother of learning. **Fixed texts and annual cycles of readings lend to deep learning.** Obviously, mindless repetition does not accomplish anything; nor does endless variety.

7. It is corporate. **Worship is a corporate activity in which the whole community of faith comes together to receive God's gifts.** "Let us go to the house of the Lord." The liturgy draws us out of ourselves into Christ by faith and the neighbor by love. We are all in this together. Worship is not simply about what "I get out of it," but I am there also for my fellow worshippers to receive the gifts of Christ that bind us together and to encourage each other to love and good works (Heb 10:25). We are drawn into the dialogue of confession and absolution, hearing and confessing, corporate song and prayer. To borrow a phrase from a favored teacher of mine, in church we are "worded, bodied, and bloodied" all together as one.

8. **It rescues us from the tyranny of the "here and now."** When the Roman world was going to hell in a hand basket, the church was debating the two natures of Christ. In the liturgy, the Word sets the agenda, defining our needs and shaping our questions. The temptation is for us to turn stones into bread to satisfy an immediate hunger and scratch a nagging spiritual itch, but the liturgy teaches us to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

9. **It is external and objective.** The liturgical goal is not that everyone feel a certain way or have an identical "spiritual" experience. Feelings vary even as they come and go. The liturgy supplies a concrete, external, objective anchor in the death and resurrection of Jesus through Word, bread, and wine. Faith comes by hearing the objective, external Word of Christ.

10. **It is the Word of God.** This is often overlooked by critics of liturgical worship. Most of the sentences and songs of the liturgy are direct quotations or allusions from Scripture or summaries, such as the Creed. In other words, the liturgy is itself the Word of God, not simply a packaging for the Word. Many times the liturgy will rescue a bad sermon and deliver what the preacher has failed to deliver. I know; I've been there.

5. Sights, Sounds, Actions, and Space in the Divine Service

When God created people, he created them with a body and a soul. So when we worship we worship not only in spirit, but also in the body. And the way in which God designed our bodies to communicate is through our senses. So it is only natural that **we use those senses in the Divine Service to fully receive and understand all that God is offering us**.

Within the Divine Service we perform different actions at different times of the Service. There is significance to each of these actions. Now we will look at these actions and their significance for us in the Divine Service.

The Sign of the Cross

[This section is taken from the liturgical resources at: http://www.lexorandi.org/signum.html and from the Gloria Christi Lutheran Church website at http://www.gloriachristi.org/id34.html. Also some parts below are based on the ELCA website at: http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Worship/Learning-Center/FAQs/Worship-without-Words.aspx.]

Crossing oneself was practiced by Christians from the earliest centuries and may go back to apostolic times. We know that was already **a common ceremony used daily in A.D. 200**, for Tertullian writes: "In all undertakings -- when we enter a place or leave it; before we dress; before we bathe; when we take our meals; when we light the lamps in the evening; before we retire at night; when we sit down to read; before each task -- we trace the sign of the cross on our foreheads." St. Augustine (A.D. 431) speaks of this custom many times in his sermons and letters.

It is one of the traditional ceremonies that was most definitely **retained by Luther and the Lutheran Church in the 16th-century Reformation**. Luther prescribed in his Small Catechism under the heading: "How the Head of the Family Should Teach His Household to Bless Themselves in the Morning and in the Evening." He says, "In the morning when you rise (and in the evening when you go to bed) you shall bless yourself with the sign of the holy cross and say: In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen." Again in his Large Catechism he recommends that parents should instruct their children to cross themselves for the purpose of recalling their divine Protector in moments of danger, terror, and temptation. This ceremony is also still authorized in many present-day Lutheran service books.

At our baptism the sign of the cross was made over our forehead and our heart as a reminder that we have been redeemed by Christ at his crucifixion. In our Baptism Christ's death becomes our death (the death of our old Adam, our sinful nature). And if we are united with Christ in his death, we will most certainly be united with him in his resurrection (Ro. 6).

The sign of the cross is made when God's name is spoken in the Divine Service. God's name is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The sign of the cross is made by placing the thumb and the first two fingers of the right hand together as a reminder of the Trinity.

The head is touched at the naming of the Father, then the hand is brought to the middle of your chest (over your heart) at the naming of the Son. At the naming of the Holy Spirit the hand moves from the chest and touches the right shoulder and then the left shoulder. Therefore **making the sign of the cross is a physical action that draws the whole self into the act of worship**.

But to be clear, **making the sign of the cross**, or not making the sign of the cross, **is part of our Christian liberty.** It should never be made a criterion for being viewed as more or less confessional, more or less liturgical, or more or less Lutheran. While the sign of the holy cross is the property of each and every baptized child of God, it is up to the individual to determine when and how he or she will use it.

In the church's worship it is a laudable custom to cross ourselves at the beginning and end of all services and at the following places in the Service or in the Order of the Holy Communion Service:

- During the opening words, "In the name etc.";
- at the end of the Absolution;
- at the beginning of the Introit;
- at the end of the Gloria in Excelsis;
- when the Gospel is announced (At this point the sign is made with the hand closed, using the tip of the thumb, upon the forehead, lips, and breast.);
- at the end of the creed;
- during the Sanctus at the words, "Blessed is He";
- after the consecration at "The peace of the Lord";
- when we receive the holy body and precious blood of Christ;
- when the minister says, "Depart in peace";
- and at the end of the Benediction

When the sign of the cross is made, whether by pastor or people, this is our proclamation: Christ has died for your sins upon the cross; in Baptism he shares that cross with you; because you share in his cross you live life as a child of God and are precious in his sight.

1 Cor 2 – Paul preaches nothing but Christ crucified

2 For I decided to know nothing among you except[c] Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Matt 28 – Baptized in God's Holy Name

18 And Jesus came and said to them, [A] "All authority[B] in heaven
and on earth has been given to me. 19 [C] Go therefore and[D] make
disciples of[E] all nations,[F] baptizing them[G] in[a] the name of the
Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Mk 8 – Each Christian has a cross to bear

34 And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to
them, "If anyone would come after me, let him[A] deny himself
and[B] take up his cross and follow me.

Ro 6 – Christians die and rise with Christ in Baptism

3 Do you not know that all of us[A] who have been baptized[B] into
Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were[C] buried
therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as[D]
Christ was raised from the dead by[E] the glory of the Father, we
too might walk in[F] newness of life.

Gal 2 – Christians are crucified with Christ

20 I have been[A] crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but
Christ who lives[B] in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live
by faith in the Son of God,[C] who loved me and[D] gave himself for
me.

Processions

Processions add a festive element to the Divine Service. The **cross leads the processions** at the beginning and end of worship, representing our baptismal journey from death to life. **It is Christ who leads us** into the Divine Service and it is Christ who leads back into the world to fulfill God's will in our lives through our appointed vocations. Some bow as the cross passes, honoring Christ and the mystery of salvation. The cross may be empty, representing Christ's victory over death. The cross may have a suffering Christ on it (a crucifix), representing the price paid for salvation. A crucifix is appropriate because it reflects on the centrality of the theology of the cross, that Christ's suffering and death leads to resurrection and new life.

Sometimes there is a procession when the Gospel is read. In this **procession the Holy Bible** along with the cross and candles make their way to the center of the congregation. Since the time of the early Church the Gospel has been considered the climax of the liturgy of the Word, and has often been accompanied with special acclamations and ceremony. The procession to the center of the nave in the midst of the people and the reading of the gospel among the people is a sign of God coming among us in Jesus Christ. Of course the cross represents Christ as the Savior, the candles represent Christ as the Light of the world, and the Bible represents Christ as the Word, the One who communicates God's grace to all people.

In some congregations gifts of money, bread and wine are carried forward during the **offertory procession.** Our financial gifts support the ministry of the congregation, the Church around the world, and outreach to the poor and needy. In days of old, the bread and wine were grown and produced by the people. So the bread and wine,

which represent our life and work, are offered with the prayer to the Lord. The bread and wine will be used for the Lord's Supper. The blessings of God for daily life are used once again by God to bless his people in the Supper unto eternal life.

Silence

Our liturgy is made up not only of words, music and ritual actions, but also of silence. **Silence is associated with confession, prayer, and meditation**. Prayer is more than speaking to God; it is an openness to the presence of the Holy One. In our busy and noise-filled lives it is often very difficult to be still and savor silence. The brief periods of silence in the liturgy are an important balance to the words and music of the service. There may be a period of silence during the confession. We take this time to concentrate on our sinfulness and need for forgiveness. During the prayers there may be a time of silence in which we bring our personal prayers to the Lord. At the end of the closing procession there may be a time of silence in which we each reflect on the theme for the day and ask God's blessing as we go forth in his Name.

Body Postures

The ways we use our bodies in the Divine Service reveal much about our attitude toward God, ourselves and creation. **The various postures and gestures of worship express our reverence for the presence of God** in the midst of our worshiping assembly.

When someone important like the president comes into a room everyone stands out of respect. In the Divine Service the Lord Jesus comes into our presence and leads us into the presence of God the Father. So we **stand,** face, and follow the processional cross as it leads us into God's presence. As we sing hymns and praises to God, we stand. As we hear the Gospel, we stand. As we offer prayers to God, we stand. As we participate in the Great Thanksgiving, we stand. As the processional cross leads us back into the world at the end of the Service, we stand and face it. **Anytime we directly interact with God we stand showing our respect.**

We **sit** when we need to be attentive and **pay attention**. So we sit to hear God's word read and explained in the scripture readings and the sermon.

Kneeling is a posture that signifies **penitence, adoration and awareness** of God's transcendence. We **kneel** for confession and during portions of the liturgies of Lent and Holy Week. We also kneel as we receive Holy Communion, as we recognize that we are at the Lord's Table receiving holy food in God's holy presence. Kneelers in the pews may also be used for prayer before the liturgy or after receiving communion.

Bowing is a sign of **reverence**. During the procession the ministers, choir and others make a simple bow toward the altar as a strong symbol of Christ's presence at the table and in our celebration of the Eucharist. Members of the assembly may bow as the cross processes and recesses, honoring this sign of our baptism into Jesus' death and resurrection. The presiding minister also bows toward the assembly which is the principal symbol of the body of Christ.

Gestures for prayer are **outstretched hands** or **folded hands, closed eyes, and bowed heads**. We fold our hands, close our eyes, and bow our heads to **keep away distractions**. When praying, our entire focus should be on our communication with God. These gestures help in that endeavor. Outstretched hands are a gesture of openness and trust that is used by the leaders of prayer during the service; the

assembly may be invited, if they feel comfortable, to pray with outstretched hands during the Lord’s Prayer.

Colors of the Church Year

Liturgical color complements the message of the seasons and occasions during the church year. **The worshiper's emotions and intellect are immediately engaged by color**. Liturgical colors aid in establishing a climate in which Law and Gospel may be heard and received. Color allows us to see the Light of Life, Jesus Christ. It serves to communicate the message of salvation. And communicate it does when it reinforces a specific "colorful" chapter in the life of our Lord and his church, retold annually by the church calendar.

- **White**, a color of **joy and festivity**, is appointed for all festivals of Christ such as Christmas, Easter, and All Saints Day. White is the color of **purity and completeness.** The theme for the "great fifty days" of Easter is supported by the use of white. This color, used primarily during these Sundays, assists in bearing the message that "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." Christ's triumph from the grave on Resurrection day is the cause for our rejoicing. His purity before his Father becomes our purity. White reinforces that message of joy.

  In addition to its use during Eastertide, white is the appointed color for such festive Sundays as Christmas and its twelve days; Epiphany (Jan. 6) and the first Sunday following it, observed as the Baptism of Our Lord; the Last Sunday after the Epiphany, also known as Transfiguration Sunday; Holy Trinity Sunday; and twenty-one minor festivals and occasions listed on the church year calendar in Lutheran Worship. In all, white serves as the best festive color for the church year.

- **Red**, the color of **fire and energy** is used for Pentecost, celebrating the giving of the Holy Spirit, Reformation, ordinations and other festivals of the Church. Red is a **power** color and is appropriate for use on Pentecost Sunday. On this day we remember the power and fire of "the Lord and Giver of Life," who revealed himself as the promised one. The color red communicates the motif of strength and power that the Holy Spirit gives in order for God's people to call on the name of Jesus Christ and share that powerful name with others.

  Red serves well as the traditional color for the heroic martyrs of the church. Their red blood shed in defense of the Gospel offers perpetual encouragement for God's people to be resolute in living the faith.

- **Scarlet** is a color anciently associated with the **passion, the color of blood**. It is used during Holy Week to mark the final days of Lent in which we meditate on Christ’s passion and death and for commemorations of saints who were martyred for their faith.

- **Green**, representing **growth**, is appointed for the seasons after Epiphany and Pentecost when we focus on spiritual growth and the teachings of Jesus. Epiphany's message of Christ's revelation to the Gentiles along with the season's traditional emphasis on extending Christ's kingdom through missions, calls for the use of green-the color symbolic of growth. Pentecost is a time to focus on our need to grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ. That's why the "green meadow" time of the church year is so lengthy. Time must be given to encourage all worshipers to maintain their faith through the constant use of God's means of grace.

- **Purple** reflects **penitence** and is used during Lent, the season of preparation for the festival of Easter. Purple, like black, is a penitential color, in contrast to a festive one. It is appropriately used during Lent and, still in many parishes, during the season of Advent. The forty days of Lent, including the six Sundays that fall during this season, use this deep, rich color which has come to represent **somberness and solemnity, penitence, and prayer**.

  Jesus, the king of the Jews, wore a purple robe only once. As the soldiers mocked and tormented him, the Scriptures record they placed on him a "purple garment" in order to ridicule him and belittle the claim that he was a monarch. Therefore, purple is used during this penitential season of Lent as **a vivid reminder of the contempt and scorn he endured, and the subsequent sacrifice he made** for our eternal salvation. Ecclesiastical purple should remind all Christians of their daily need to humbly give attention to leading a life of **repentance**.

- **Blue** is the color for Advent and calls to mind the **sky and hope**. It expresses the **waiting and expectation** of Advent, the season of preparation for the festival of Christmas. Our Christian faith rests on the hope that Christ, who came in history assuming our flesh, will also return on the last day of time from that same blue sky he ascended long ago.

- **Gold** is used to heighten the **joy and celebration** of this feast of feasts. Gold is the optional color for Easter Sunday. It is also the suggested color for the last Sunday in the church year when that day is observed as Christ the King Sunday (LBW). Its use may not be popular yet, but its emphasis is undeniable. Gold represents **value and worth**. The golden festival of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the event that gives our lives meaning and worth. He is worthy of our praise as we adorn his altar with the color of **splendor**.

- **Black** is the color of **ashes**. The calendar calls for its use only twice; on Good Friday and Ash Wednesday. There's no mistaking the message that this sober color gives. Black is the **absence of light**. Good Friday, or Black Friday in combination with Ash Wednesday, calls for sober reflection on the cost of our redemption. Without Christ's sacrifice on the day the sky turned dark and hid the light of the sun, there would be no bright Light of Christ to live in, nor new life in Christ to enjoy.

- **No color** is used on Good Friday, as the worship space is bare and **stripped** of all color and furnishings. It represents Christ being stripped of everything as he hung on the cross for us.

What is the purpose of using colors in the Divine Service? Their purpose is to serve God's worshiping community by assisting in **communicating the holy faith** from generation to generation. In every age, the beauty and symbolism of color in the church continues to serve us exceptionally well!

Robes, Dress For Worship Leaders

The leaders for worship wear garb rooted in tradition. The basic white robe, called an **alb**, is worn by the ministers, worship leaders and the choir. The alb was originally the everyday garb in the ancient Mediterranean world; **it represents the white robe of baptism.** To live our baptism is to “put on Christ” and be a part of the body of Christ.

In addition to the alb, pastors wear a **stole**, similar to the Jewish prayer-shawl worn by leaders of prayer. The stole **signifies the unique role of the pastor** to announce the forgiveness of sins, to preach the Law and Gospel, and to preside at services of Holy Communion and Holy Baptism. The principle garb of the presiding minister is called a **chasuble**. The original chasuble was like the traveling garment or "poncho" in the ancient world. There are chasubles in each of the liturgical colors and its full shape represents God's embrace of the whole assembly.

One of the purposes of vestments is to cover the person so that we do not focus on the individual but upon the means of grace (Gospel and Sacraments). It is also to indicate the office the person holds by virtue of call, ordination or consecration. Therefore a pastor wears a stole and/or a chasuble to **indicate his office** and the particular order of service that is being conducted. An acolyte may simply wear a cassock and cotta. Another **purpose of vestments** is to adorn the liturgist and assistants to indicate the **reverence, joy, and holiness of the Divine Service**.

Sacred Space, the Layout of the Church

[This section come from: http://www.holycrossdakotadunes.org/resources/symbol.pdf.]

Before a Lutheran church is built much thought and preparation is made. An architect is hired who designs every detail of the church. And **every detail has meaning**. What follows here is a summary of information taken from a website for a church in South Dakota which explains the layout and meaning behind the details of the church they built.

If you were able to look down from the sky, you would see that many churches are built in the shape of a **cross**. This is intentional. As Christians, Christ crucified on a cross is central to our faith and many churches are intentionally built this way as a reminder of that fact. The particular church that we will be looking at did not have room to build their church in this way so they chose a different shape to pattern their church after. They chose the shape of a shell. This shape is as wide as it is long which worked better for their property. Why pattern it after a shell? A shell is the symbol for baptism. In Baptism God connects us to Christ's death and resurrection and brings us into his family. So entering this shell-shaped church would be a reminder of God's grace given us in baptism, a reminder of how we entered into God's family.

The **shell** symbol usually includes three drops of water. The water of course reminds us of the water of baptism. There are three drops of water because it reminds us of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three drops in this church would be represented by three large windows in the front, one for the Father, one for the Son, and one for the Holy Spirit. The center window would be above the altar and behind a large cross and represent the Son and his work of redemption. The window to its left would represent the Father and his work of creation. And the window on the right would represent the Holy Spirit and his work of sanctification.

At the entrance to the sanctuary is the **baptismal font** in the baptistery. It too incorporates the shell theme for the same reasons given above. Entering the church through the baptistery reminds each person that they entered into God's family through baptism. And leaving through the baptistery would be a reminder as they

leave this place and go back into the world, that they leave as Christians called to bring the Light and Salt of Christ into this dark and dying world.

Front and center in the church is a large **cross** which is above the altar. The cross is the center of the Christian faith. On the cross Jesus died to win forgiveness for all people. The cross is above the altar because the altar is where sacrifices are made. So it is a reminder that Jesus willingly sacrificed himself on the altar of the cross for us.

The **processional cross** that leads us into worship and out to the world at this church is a crucifix, a cross with Jesus on it. This is reminder of the terrible suffering and death that was caused by our sins. It is also a reminder of the great love our Savior has for us, so much love that he was willing to suffer and die in this horrendous way.

The three large windows previously mentioned are **stained glass windows**. The pictures included in these windows tell the whole story of scripture. The first window, representing God the Father, shows the hand of God as he created the world. It shows God's perfect world being corrupted by sin. And it shows the Father continuing to preserve and care for his world. Seeing this window will be a reminder that God is over his creation, not abandoning it after we ruined it, but still ruling over it and caring for it.

The second window, representing God the Son, depicts Jesus' nativity, his ministry, his crucifixion, and his resurrection. Jesus came to do all of this for our redemption. This window will be a reminder of the whole reason God became man and then gave his life for the world.

The third window, representing God the Holy Spirit, shows a dove, the tongues of fire at Pentecost, the Means of Grace (God's Word, water for baptism, wheat and wine for the bread and wine of Holy Communion), and eternal life in the form of crowns. This window will be a reminder that the Holy Spirit works through the Word and Sacraments to bring us to faith and to eternal life.

In front of the church there are two "slopes" at the sides of the altar. These slopes represent **hands lifted up in prayer**. These "praying hands" mark the church as a house of prayer for all people. In between the hands is the cross, for it is to the cross that we cling to in faith for our salvation as we pray.

The **altar rail** separates the chancel were God is present from the rest of the church. We sinners can dare go up to the rail for Holy Communion because Jesus has taken away our sins allowing us to approach God without fear. And yet we come humbly, with respect, and at his invitation.

The most prominent feature in the chancel area is the **altar**. It represents the sacrifice that Christ made on the cross. The benefits of this one-time sacrifice are made available through the Sacrament of the Altar (Holy Communion). The top of the altar has five crosses, one for each of the wounds that Christ suffered (nails in both hands and both feet and spear in his side) as if he were laid on the altar as a sacrifice. Covering the altar is fine, white linen which represents the white cloth that our Lord was wrapped in for His rest in the tomb.

The next most prominent furnishing is the **pulpit** from which the Word of God is preached. Complimenting the pulpit is the lectern from which God's Word is read. The Word of God in its Law and Gospel form is what shows us that we are sinner, shows us that Jesus is our Savior from sin, and is the means through which the Holy Spirit brings us to faith.

Candles are also used in church. An **eternal flame** is a flame that remains perpetually lit to remind us of God's continuous presence with us, like the seven candles in the OT tabernacle. There are usually **two candles**, one on each side of the altar. These two candles represent Christ as the Light of the world. One candle is represents Christ's human nature and one represents his divine nature. Like candles on a birthday cake, these candles represent our joy in our salvation. There is also a **Paschal candle**, the Christ candle. It is the large candle that is lit Easter morning and it symbolizes the return of Christ's soul into His body, which had lain lifeless in the tomb. The Paschal Candle is located near lectern during the Easter season and is lit for services from Easter through Ascension, to symbolize Christ's 40 days teaching His disciples after His resurrection. It is extinguished on Ascension Day during the Gospel Reading, at the point when it says He "was taken up into heaven".

The above describes the architecture and layout of one particular church. Each church is different from other churches, yet all churches have much in common. All Lutheran churches center on the cross of Christ, center on the Triune God, and center on the Word and Sacraments. The layout of a church helps the congregation see all that God has done and still does for them. The shapes, pictures, and symbols of church communicate the salvation God provides for us.

Chanting, Liturgical Dialogue

[This section is based on an article from the Gloria Christi Lutheran Church website: http://www.gloriachristi.org/id30.html]

Chanting in the Divine Service goes way back, back to the early NT church and back even to the OT. In many ways chant serves as a **"vestment" for the voice**. Chant, as a kind of combination between singing and speaking, serves to **de-emphasize** the idiosyncrasies of **the person** conducting the liturgy or assisting and helps to **emphasize the mystical and sacramental unity and communion between Christ and His Bride**, the Church. In this way also, chant serves as a kind of vocal "uniform" like the basic liturgical vestments or even the clerical shirt and collar. Theologically speaking, personality doesn't then matter much from one pastor to another so long as the Gospel is preached purely and the sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution (Acts 2:42; Augsburg Confession VII). **Chant helps convey this uniformity in office and provides continuity of the church beyond simply our own local congregation and beyond the moment and century that we live in now**.

When both pastor and congregation chant their respective parts of the liturgical **dialogue** the simple fact of the liturgy as a dialogue is made abundantly clear. The dialogue or conversation takes place in the same mode or genre, if you will. It is rather odd when the pastor speaks his parts and the congregation sings theirs. Imagine an opera or a musical conducted in such format. In these instances of speaking pastors and chanting congregations, the two parts seem hardly to go

together and understanding the liturgy as a grace-delivering-and-receiving conversation is affected.

Likewise, chant helps to emphasize that the Divine Service is heaven coming down to earth in the means of Christ's grace (Revelation 4,5; Isaiah 6:1-7; Acts 2:42; I Corinthians 11; Luke 22:27). It communicates the divine mystery of this transaction of the means of grace and faith. **Chant clothes and elevates the words** that are spoken **so that the message is the main thing,** rather than the personality quirks of the messenger (see I Corinthians 1,2). For we do not preach ourselves but Christ and Him crucified. This vestment for the voice adorns the liturgy with the joy of song in a way that also accommodates the characteristics of regular speech. The Lord's presence is a cause for rejoicing in song, even in this gift's delivery. And yet this is to be done in such a way that it is not entertainment, but a high and holy encounter with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who condescends to be with His redeemed people. In short, **chant carries benefits from both song and speech in one form.**

In our consumeristic culture of contemporary worship and "praise bands," **chant** runs against the Zeitgeist and **carries its own culture** that is shaped by time-tested forms rather than the liturgy du jour. **The church is in the world and yet not of the world**. Chant helps to emphasize this. Chant has been evident and valued in the more confessional periods of Lutheran history. May our churches be such oases of the holy Triune God's grace that we may say with one of our hymns:

Here Thy praise is gladly chanted,
Here Thy seed is duly sown;
Let my soul, where it is planted,
Bring forth precious sheaves alone,
So that all I hear may be
Fruitful unto life in me.

["Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty", TLH #1]

6. Preparation for the Divine Service

We now take a look at the first part of the Divine Service – the Service of Preparation. We will look at and explain each of the individual parts of the Preparation.

Prelude

The pre-service music is called the prelude. Before the service begins the organist will play music that sets the tone for the service. The tone might be one of reverence, joy, or awe. During the prelude one may pray, read the scripture lessons for the day, or read through the hymns selected for the day. During the prelude one may meditate on God's Word, the themes for the day, or the current themes of the church season. **The prelude provides a time to prepare one's mind and heart for the Divine Service.**

Processional Hymn
(Also called the Hymn of Invocation or Gathering)

The Service of Preparation begins with a hymn. This hymn might be called by several different names. Sometimes it is called the Procession Hymn because the crucifier (the person carrying the cross) leads a procession of acolytes (the persons who light the candles), robed choir members (representing the angels that continually surround God's throne praising God), and pastor(s). The cross obviously symbolizes Christ who leads us into the Father's presence in the Divine Service. Therefore **during the procession everyone in the congregation stands and is oriented toward the cross, thereby showing reverence towards Christ.**

The opening hymn is also called the Hymn of Invocation or the Gathering Hymn. There is but one true God, the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Many hymns speak of the Triune God with a verse dedicated to the Father, a verse dedicated to the Son, a verse dedicated to the Holy Spirit, and a final verse that includes all three, showing that the three persons are united in one God. **In this hymn then we acknowledge the Triune God and that it is He who has called us as his own and gathered us together this day to meet with us and graciously give us his gifts.**

The Benefits of using Hymns

Hymns are used throughout the church service and provide many benefits. Before the Reformation the priests and choirs chanted and sang in Latin during the service. Luther introduced hymns sung by the congregation in their native tongue. Luther held music in such high regard that he said, "Next to theology I give to music the highest place and honor." This change helped the **congregation participate in the service** instead of standing back as spectators. And since it was in the language of the people the people could also understand and **proclaim their faith in song**.

Hymns are always taken from the Word of God. Hymns are God's Word put into poetic form and set to music. Hymns are not entertaining. **Hymns proclaim God's Word in song.** Hymns teach God's Word and the Christian faith. Hymns are a type of confession (see the Confession below for an explanation of the word "confess") as the congregation, in faith, sings back to God what he has told us in his Word, the Scriptures.

Hymns sung by the congregation not only proclaim the Gospel, but are also **a response to the Gospel**. They are a means by which we give God thanksgiving and praise for his grace to us. The fruit of faith is praise and thanksgiving and one way to express them is through hymns.

The debate over hymns vs. praise music usually revolves around the style of music. But more important than the style is the purpose behind the style of music. The purpose for praise music is obviously to evoke praise to God. The purpose for hymns is to convey a message and that message is the Gospel and the Gospel is what powers faith and is the means by which the Holy Spirit works. An analogy will make the difference between the two very clear. Using praise music instead of hymns would be like a parent taking away a child's bread, fruit, vegetables, and meat and instead feeding him cake, ice cream, soda, and chips. Would any child complain? There is a place for cake and ice cream but not as the main meal! The Gospel is the power of God for salvation. Through the Gospel the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens faith. **The Gospel must be central to our music just as it is in the rest of the service.**

Invocation

In the invocation the pastor, representing the people gathered, invokes God's name by saying, "We begin in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" and by making the sign of the cross. The people respond by saying, "Amen" (which means, Yes! it is true) and by making the sign of the cross. **Invoking the name of the Triune God** does at least four things.

First, it is a statement of faith; it states a truth. It says that **all those gathered at this place at this time believe there is only one true God** (1 Cor. 8:5-6) and **the one true God is the Triune God** (Mt. 28:18-20). It says we are gathered here in his name and in his presence, to receive his gracious gifts, and to respond to him by worshipping him.

> **Mt. 28 – God's Triune Name**
> **18**And Jesus came and said to them, (A) "All authority(B) in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19**(C) Go therefore and(D) make disciples of(E) all nations,(F) baptizing them(G) in[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20**teaching them(H) to observe all that(I) I have commanded you. And behold,(J) I am with you always, to(K) the end of the age."
>
> **1 Cor. 8 – One True God**
> **5**For although there may be(J) so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"— **6**yet(K) for us there is one God, the Father,(L) from whom are all

things and for whom we exist, and(M) one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and(N) through whom we exist.

Second, by invoking the name of the Triune God, those who are gathered **are asking for and acknowledging God's presence among them** (Mt. 18:20; Ex. 20:24). They believe he is as he says, Immanuel, that is, "God with us." They believe Jesus' words that if they gather in Jesus' name he will be there in their midst.

Mt. 18 – Gathering in Jesus' Name

20For where two or three are(C) gathered in my name,(D) there am I among them."

Ex. 20:24 – God's Name Equals God's Presence

24An altar of earth you shall make for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen.(A) In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and(B) bless you.

Third, the invocation **recalls the baptism of each Christian**. When a Christian is baptized, he is baptized into the name of the Triune God (Mt. 28:18-20). The Christian is baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus (Ro. 6:3-4). Because of this the sign of the cross is made on the forehead, the mouth, and the heart, signifying that Christ's death and resurrection has an effect on our thoughts, words, and deeds. The Christian then leads a baptismal life, a life of daily dying to sin and rising to a new life of faith and love.

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Ro. 6 – Baptized into Christ's Death and Resurrection

3Do you not know that all of us(C) who have been baptized(D) into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4**We were(E) buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as(F) Christ was raised from the dead by(G) the glory of the Father, we too might walk in(H) newness of life.

1 Peter – Jesus Died that "We Might Die to Sin and Live to Righteousness"

24(AW) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we(AX) might die to sin and(AY) live to righteousness.(AZ) By his wounds you have been healed.

Fourth, the invoking of the Triune God reminds us of God's work of creation and re-creation. In the beginning the Father spoke the Word and created the universe while the Holy Spirit watched over it. The beginning of John's gospel tells us that Jesus, the son of God, is the Word. As all three persons of the Trinity were involved in creating the world, so **all three are involved in re-creating sinful people into God's children**. Baptism into Christ makes us new creatures. The old sinful person passes away. In its place God creates a new person filled with love and joy.

Gen. 1 – The Triune God Creates the World

1 In the(A) beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
2 The earth was(B) without form and void, and darkness was over
the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the
face of the waters. **3** And God said,(C) "Let there be light," and
there was light.

2 Cor. 15 – The Christian is a New Creation

17 Therefore, if anyone is(B) in Christ, he is(C) a new creation.[a](D)
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

When God's name is invoked, we do as Prov. 18:10 says: **We run into God's name, knowing that it is strong and a place of safety.** When we have invoked his name, the creator of the universe is present with us. And if God is for us, who can stand against us?

Prov. 18 – God's Name is Strong and Safe

10(A) The name of the LORD is(B) a strong tower;
the righteous man runs into it and(C) is safe.

The fact that we have gathered in the name and presence of the Triune God also makes a statement in the negative. If we are gathered in the name of the Triune God, then we are not gathered in the name of any other god. So **we are making a statement that there are no other gods.** All other gods are false, fake, dead, and made up. If someone does not believe that God is the Father and the Son and the Holy, then he does not believe in the one, true, living God.

Luther, in his small Catechism, teaches us to **invoke the name of the Triune God each morning as we wake and each evening as we go to bed**. This is part of our Baptismal life of daily dying and rising. Doing so does the same thing for the individual at home as it does in the Divine Service for the congregation. By invoking God's name each morning and evening, the individual declares his belief in the Triune God, acknowledges God's presence in his life, recalls his baptism into Christ's death and resurrection, and recognizes God's re-creative work in his life, providing him with a strong place of safety.

Confession and Absolution

Holy God is now present with us. What happens when sinful people come into the presence of the Holy God? When Moses came before God at the burning bush, God told him to take off his sandals because he stood on holy ground (Ex 3:5). Isaiah (Is. 6:1-6) and Peter (Lk. 5:8) also stood before Holy God. When they did, both of them

recognized that they were sinful through and through. Both Isaiah and Peter reacted with fear because of their sinfulness and his holiness. But these stories don't end with trembling and fear. The angel (God's messenger) assured Isaiah that his guilt had been taken away and his sin had been atoned for. Jesus told Peter to not be afraid. So **when sinful people come before Holy God: they stand on holy ground; they fear God because of their sinfulness; and God tells them not to fear because Jesus has made atonement for their sin.**

> **Ex. 3 – God Tells Moses that He is Standing on Holy Ground**
> [5]Then he said, "Do not come near;[F] take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is *holy ground*."
>
> **Is. 6 – Isaiah Recognizes His Sinfulness in Yahweh's Holy Presence**
> [5]And I said: "*Woe is me!*[H] For I am lost;[I] for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the[J] King, the LORD of hosts!" … [7]And he[K] touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; *your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.*"
>
> **Luke 5 – Peter Recognizes His Own Sinfulness in Jesus' Presence**
> [8]But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying,[I] "Depart from me, for[J] *I am a sinful man*, O Lord." … [10]and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "*Do not be afraid*; from now on you will be catching men."

How does holy God react to sin? **God by nature cannot tolerate sin and must punish sin**. This is why Moses, Isaiah, and Peter reacted with fear. This is also why God sent his Son into the world to take away sin. He did it so he could have a relationship with people. In the confession, each (sinful) member of the congregation now honestly examines himself in the light of God's holy Law**. In measuring himself against the Law, he sees that he does not measure up; he misses the target; he is rebellious.** He sees that even his most righteous deeds are like filthy rags (Is. 64:6), that no one can stand before God (Ps 130:3). He sees himself as God's Law sees him, as a sinner. **He then humbly kneels before God and confesses the truth of his sinfulness** (1 Jn. 1:8-9). ("Confess" means "say the same thing." When we confess, we "say the same thing" that God says through his Law: "You are guilty of sin.") Most people in the world are not willing to do this. They would rather hide it, deny it, or cover it up; this is our sinful human nature. **The Christian however is willing to do this because he knows that God is a gracious God who forgives sin for Christ's sake.**

The words of the Confession and Absolution are as follows:

Setting One Confession and Absolution:

> **The pastor says:** "If we says we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

The congregation responds: "But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1Jn. 1:8-9)

The congregation is then invited to kneel or stand to reflect upon and confess their sins.

The pastor says: "Let us then confess our sins to God our Father."

The congregation confesses their sins by saying: "Most merciful God, we confess that we are my nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen."

The pastor announces the absolution by saying either of the following: "Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." [Jn. 20:19-23]

Or

"In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."(Jn. 1:12; Phil. 1:6)

The congregation responds with: "Amen."

Setting Three Confession and Absolution:

The pastor says: "Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness [Heb. 10:22].

The pastor says: " Our help is in the name of the Lord."
The congregation responds with: "who made heaven and earth" (Ps. 124:8).
The pastor says: "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,"
The congregation responds with: "and You forgave the iniquity of my sin." (Ps. 32:5).

The pastor invites the congregation to stand or kneel for silent reflection and for the confession.

[Two different confessions/absolutions may be used in this setting.]

The pastor says: "O almighty God, merciful Father."
The congregation joins in with: "I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all of my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserve Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings, and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me a poor, sinful being."

The words of absolution spoken by the Pastor: "Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit [Jn. 20:19-23].
The congregation responds with: "Amen."

OR

The pastor begins the confession with: "Almighty God, our maker and redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The congregation then joins in: "O most merciful God, who has given Your only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us

and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, to the end that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The pastor pronounces the absolution: "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe on His name He gives power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Grant this Lord unto us all. (Mk. 16:16; Jn. 1:12).

The confession of sins that Lutherans use is packed with several important Scriptural truths. First, **we confess both original and actual sin**. When we come into this world we come in a sinful state, a state of rebellion against God (original sin). In this state we are by nature sinful. Second, **we admit that we as individuals have sinned, that we stand guilty before God**. Our sinful condition leads us to commit actual sins (actual sin), sins where we do, say, and think what we shouldn't (sins of commission) and sins where we don't do, say, and think what we should (sins of omission).

Our confession doesn't end with admission of sin and guilt, it continues with several requests. We request that God **forgive us** of these offenses**, renew us** that we might be and live more like his children, and **lead us** in a life of following Jesus.

After the confession, the pastor, representing Jesus, **announces the forgiveness of all of our sin** (1 Jn. 1:8-9; Jn. 20:23). **This is the Good News of the Gospel**, that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, God forgives your sins. This announcement is made "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" because all three persons of the Trinity are involved the work of redemption and that redemption was first given to you at your baptism (1 Pet. 1:2).

Isaiah 64 – All have sinned

6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our
righteous acts are like *filthy rags*; we all shrivel up like a leaf,
and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Ps 130 – If God kept a record of sin, no one could stand before him

3 If you, O LORD, should(A) mark *iniquities*,
O Lord, *who could*(B) *stand*?

Ps. 51 – Admittance of Sin and Cry for Mercy and Forgiveness

1(B) *Have mercy* on me,[a] O God,
according to your *steadfast love*;
according to your(C) *abundant mercy*
(D) *blot out my transgressions*.

2(E) *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity*,
and(F) *cleanse me from my sin*!

Lk. 18 – Recognize Sinful Condition, Plead for Mercy, and Receive Forgiveness

13But the tax collector,(T) standing far off,(U) would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but(V) beat his breast, saying, 'God,(W) be merciful to me, a sinner!' 14I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For(X) everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

1 Jn. 1:8-9 – Confession and Absolution

8(A) If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and(B) the truth is not in us. **9**(C) If we confess our sins, he is(D) faithful and just to forgive us our sins and(E) to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jn. 20:23 - Absolution

23(L) If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

1 Pet. 1 – The Triune God's Work of Redemption

2according to(B) the foreknowledge of God the Father,(C) in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and(D) for sprinkling with his blood:

John 20 – Christ Gives Authority to Forgive Sins

21Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As(AF) the Father has sent me,(AG) even so I am sending you." 22And when he had said this, he(AH) breathed on them and said to them, (AI) "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23(AJ) If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."

Some people are scandalized by the pastor saying, "I forgive you all your sins." They say that only God can forgive sins. And they are correct. So how can a pastor say, "I forgive you all your sins"? The pastor is an ambassador for Christ. Christ calls him and ordains him. **Christ gives him the authority and commands him to forgive the sins of those who are repentant.** That is why the pastor says, "Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word," and later he says, "in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ". **In actuality it is Christ who forgives sin**. He won forgiveness of sins for all people and he authorizes pastors to pronounce the free gift of forgiveness to all who repent.

John 20 – Christ Gives Authority to Forgive Sins

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> has sent me,(AG) even so I am sending you." **22**And when he had
> said this, he(AH) breathed on them and said to them, (AI) "Receive
> the Holy Spirit. **23**(AJ) If you forgive the sins of any, they are
> forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is
> withheld."

Notice that every setting for confession and absolution has a common theme. Below are phrases taken directly from the confession and absolution in various settings. What word do they all have in common?

- Most merciful God, we confess…
- For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.
- Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you…
- In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die …
- almighty God, merciful Father.
- …to be gracious and merciful to me a poor, sinful being.
- Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy,…
- most merciful God, who has given Your only-begotten Son…
- …have mercy upon us and for His sake…
- Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us…

The common word in each phrase is “mercy.” In the confession and absolution we acknowledge that: God is a merciful God; He has shown mercy in sending his only Son to die for us; God’s mercy is infinite and we take refuge in it and we ask God to have mercy on us**. In his mercy God identifies with us and sees the hopeless situation we have gotten ourselves into and rescues us by sending his Son, Jesus.** Jesus did for us what we could not do for ourselves. He lived the perfect life that God expects and paid the full penalty for our sins that we have incurred. All we need to do is simply believe in Jesus and we will be forgiven because of God’s mercy.

7. The Divine Service: The Service of the Word

Introit

The word "introit" means "entrance." **It marks the beginning of the Service of the Word**. Having received the Lord's forgiveness, we are free and glad to enter into His courts with praise and thanksgiving (Ps. 100:4). We love to be in God's house, the place where he is present with us (Ps.26:8). Up to this point in the Divine Service, the pastor has not entered into the chancel area (the area around the altar). This is God's holy domain. Having been assured by God of forgiveness, the pastor (and the congregation, the priesthood of all believers that he represents) can now enter into God's holy presence without any worries.

Psalm 100 – Enter God's Presence with Singing, Thanksgiving, and Praise

1 (B) Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!
2 (C) Serve the LORD with gladness!
(D) Come into his presence with singing!

3 Know that (E) the LORD, he is God!
It is he who (F) made us, and (G) we are his; [a]
we are his (H) people, and (I) the sheep of his pasture.

4 (J) Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his (K) courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; (L) bless his name!

5 (M) For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his (N) faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 26 – I Love to Be in God's House Where He is Present

8 O LORD, I (M) love the habitation of your house
and the place where your glory dwells.

The Introit is usually drawn from the Psalms (the OT hymnal). The structure of the introit that Lutherans use is as follows: Antiphon, Psalm Verses, Gloria Patri, and Antiphon. The **Antiphon** is the most important part of the Introit. It is a short passage from the scriptures that **proclaims not only the significance of the day, but also the cardinal truth concerning eternal salvation** which is to be stressed on that particular day of worship. The Psalm backs up the theme of the Antiphon. The Gloria Patri concludes the Introit, just as it concludes all psalms.

A Word About the Gloria Patri

The Gloria Patri is a doxology, that is, praise to God. In the early centuries when the Jews (non-Christians) read a psalm they would end it with a doxology. The Christians continued this tradition, but the doxology they used made it clear that God is truly the Triune God. By using this doxology **it made clear that all of Scripture is God's word and that it has been fulfilled by Jesus Christ and that through it the Holy Spirit works to create and strengthen faith.**

Kyrie Eleison

[See http://www.christforus.org/Papers/Content/why_go_to_church.html]

The Kyrie Eleison ("Lord have mercy") comes next and sets the foundation for the entire Divine Service. Having been forgiven and entered into his courts, **we now boldly come before God making our requests known to him**. All that the Father does for us and gives to us comes through Jesus. Jesus is our intercessor and advocate. **So in the Kyrie we come before the risen Lord Jesus as beggars pleading for mercy.** This is not a plea for mercy for forgiveness, for we have just received God's merciful forgiveness in the absolution. In the Kyrie we pray for the needs of ourselves, the church, and the whole world.

When we cry out to Jesus for mercy we join in the pleas of those who met Jesus as recorded for us in the Gospels (Mk. 10:46-47; Mt. 15:22; Lk. 17:12-14). The Kyrie does at least three things. **It means first of all that we do not come to church to do something for God or for our neighbor.** The blind beggar did not offer to do anything for Jesus. Likewise, the ten lepers had nothing to offer. Neither did the woman from Canaan who was willing to be a dog if it would get her a few crumbs of mercy from Jesus. **No, we like them come as beggars with nothing to offer.**

Second, **the Kyrie is an acknowledgement, a confession, that Jesus, the Christ, is present with us.** Those who beg for mercy confess that Jesus is the Christ by calling him the Son of David. "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy." The Lord to whom we are crying is here to help and to meet our plea with his mercy. **And so in the Kyrie, we "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"** (Heb. 4:16).

Third, as we said above, the Kyrie sets the tone and context for everything that follows in the Divine Service. As beggars **we come reaching out with open hands ready to receive all that the Lord has to offer.** We are ready to receive God's word in the readings, the sermon and the creed, his body and blood in the Lord's Supper, and his blessing as he dismisses us.

Why do you go to church? Why do you attend church services? Why do you need the Divine Service and regard attendance at this weekly event to be the most precious time of your life? You go to, attend, and need the Divine Service because you need mercy from God. You need that love that you do not deserve. You need grace to cover all your sin. You need Jesus, and you need him to be with you, and you need him to give you the peace with God that comes only from his blood shed on Calvary. **And the only way we can receive these gifts is in the manner of a beggar and through God's great mercy.**

46(CA) And they came to Jericho. And(CB) as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus,(CC) a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. **47**And when he heard that it was(CD) Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Mt. 15 – Canaanite Woman Cries for Mercy to Rid Her Daughter of a Demon
22And behold,(AC) a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying,(AD) "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon."

Lk. 17 – Ten Lepers Cry Out to Jesus for Mercy for Healing
12And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers,[f](R) who stood at a distance **13**and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." **14**When he saw them he said to them, "Go and(S) show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed.

Heb. 4 – Look to God's Mercy in Time of Need
16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need".

The Hymn of Praise

We have made a plea through Jesus for God's mercy in the Kyrie Eleison. How will God answer this plea? How will he meet our needs? **His answer comes in the hymn of praise. All of our needs are met in Jesus, the Incarnate Son.** This truth was clearly made known to the shepherds in the fields by the angels at the birth of Jesus in *The Gloria*. And later in the Revelation of John, Jesus (the Lamb) and the Father are praised in the song *This is the Feast* for having won the victory over all of our enemies and for now sitting enthroned in the position of power. The Kyrie is foundational for the Divine Service because it shows that we come as beggars ready to receive God's gifts. Likewise, **the hymn of praise is foundational because it tells how God meets the needs of his people.** His Son became incarnate (was made man) and won victory over our enemies through his death and resurrection and he now reigns over all creation.

So the congregation sings one of the two following hymns of praise.

The Gloria

As we said, God takes care of all of our needs through Jesus. This truth was made known to the shepherds and is now made know to us also in *The Gloria*. As the angels proclaimed the Good News, they spoke from the presence of God; they spoke for God; and through this song, they speak to us today. **The angels told of the birth of the Savior who would reconcile the world to God.** The angels invite us to join with them in celebrating the reunion of heaven and earth by God's Son. Together with all the angels in heaven and the whole company of saints in heaven and on earth, we

form a single choir that stands before God and proclaims his glory and peace to the whole world.

This song was sung at the first Christmas when Christ came in the flesh. In a way, each Divine Service is Christmas because in each Christ comes in the flesh in the Sacrament. At the first Christmas **Christ came to bring peace and goodwill**. **And in the Divine Service Christ comes to do the same thing.**

The Gloria not only extols the fact that God became incarnate (God took on human flesh), but **it links the incarnation to God's work of redemption in Christ.** The One who became incarnate (God the Son, Jesus) also became the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world, who now sits at the right hand of the Father, who hears our prayer. It plainly states that Jesus is the Most High; He is God; and He is holy; He is the Son of God. He is the One that we praise, bless, worship, glorify, and give thanks to.

Text to the Gloria in Excelsis

Glory be to God on high.
And on earth peace towards men of good will.
We praise thee.
We bless thee.
We worship thee.
We glorify thee.
We give thanks to thee for thy great glory.
O Lord God, heavenly King
God the Father almighty.
O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesus Christ.
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right of the Father, have mercy upon us.
For thou only art Holy. Thou only art the Lord. Thou only art the Most High.
Thou only, O Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art Most High in the glory of God the Father. Amen.[8]

Luke 2 – Jesus the Savior is born

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field,
keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the
Lord(O) appeared to them, and(P) the glory of the Lord shone
around them, and they were filled with fear. 10 And the angel said
to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great
joy that will be for all(Q) the people. 11 For(R) unto you is born this
day in(S) the city of David(T) a Savior, who is(U) Christ(V) the Lord.

12 And(W) this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby(X) wrapped
in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there
was with the angel(Y) a multitude of the heavenly host praising
God and saying,
14(Z) "Glory to God(AA) in the highest,
(AB) and on earth(AC) peace among those with whom he is
pleased!"[c]

This Is the Feast

God the Son came as a man in order that he might suffer, die, and rise again to take away the sins of the world. In this unlikely way, Jesus won victory for us. In *This Is the Feast* we praise God the Father for creating and controlling the world and we praise God the Son who willingly came as the Lamb sacrificing himself for us. **God (the Father) and the Lamb (God the Son) are worthy of praise for they have won the victory and sit enthroned over all things.**

This is the Feast is taken from Revelation where the rule of God and the Lamb are proclaimed in heaven. This hymn is sung by the angels and by the church triumphant, the saints who have died and gone to heaven. Now the church militant, that is, the church on earth who still battles evil, joins in the hymn. The church on earth, like John the Baptist and the apostle Paul, recognizes that Jesus is the Lamb of God, our Passover Lamb, who has come to take away the sins of the world by sacrificing himself. **The angels, the church in heaven and the church on earth all join together in this hymn of praise that proclaims that the victory has already been won by Christ and that the Lamb and the Father sit enthroned ruling over all things.**

Text of This is the Feast of Victory

This is the feast of victory for our God
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Worthy is Christ, the Lamb, who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God.
This is the feast of victory for our God
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Power, riches, wisdom, and strength
and honor, blessing and glory are His.
This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Sing with all the people of God,
and join in the hymn of all creation:
Blessing, honor, glory, and might
be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.
This is the feast of victory for our God
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
For the Lamb who was slain
has begun His reign. Alleluia.

This is the feast of victory for our God
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

John 1 – Jesus the Lamb of God

29The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said,
"Look, *the Lamb* of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

1 Corinthians 5 – Christ Our Passover Lamb

7Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, *our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed*.

Rev. 4: Worthy is God, the Creator

9And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne,(T) who lives forever and ever, **10**the twenty-four elders(U) fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast(V) their crowns before the throne, saying,
11(W) "*Worthy are you, our Lord and God,*
to receive glory and honor and power,
for(X) you created all things,
and(Y) by your will they existed and were created."

Rev. 5 – Worthy is Christ; He shed his blood to ransom people

8And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders(AI) fell down before the Lamb,(AJ) each holding a harp, and(AK) golden bowls full of incense,(AL) which are the prayers of the saints. 9And they sang(AM) a new song, saying,

"Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for(AN) you were slain, and by your blood(AO) you ransomed people for God
from(AP) every tribe and language and people and nation,
10and you have made them(AQ) a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth."

Rev. 5 – The saints, angels, and all of creation worship the Father and the Lamb

11Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering(AR) myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12saying with a loud voice,(AS) "*Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!*" 13And I heard(AT) every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them,

saying, "*To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!*" [14]And the four living creatures[AU] said, "Amen!" and the elders[AV] fell down and worshiped.

Rev. 19 – The saints on earth rejoice in the marriage feast of the Lamb

6Then I heard what seemed to be[J] the voice of a great multitude, like[K] the roar of many waters and[L] like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

"Hallelujah!*For the Lord our God*
the Almighty[M] *reigns*.
7Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for[N] the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and[O] his Bride has made herself ready;
8[P] it was granted her to clothe herself
with fine linen, bright and pure"—

for the fine linen is[Q] the righteous deeds of the saints.

9And the angel said[b] to me, "Write this:[R] Blessed are those who are invited to *the marriage supper of the Lamb*." And he said to me,[S] "These are the true words of God." **10**Then[T] I fell down at his feet to worship him,[U] but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant[c] with you and your brothers who hold to[V] the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

Salutation and Collect for the Day (or Prayer of the Day)

The Collect is a prayer to the Triune God. But before we pray the Collect, there is the Salutation.

Salutation

Up until now in the Service of the Word, the Pastor has faced the altar and has led and joined the congregation in crying for mercy in the Kyrie and in praising God in the Hymn of Praise. He now turns toward the congregation. Whenever he faces the congregation, he is speaking as God's representative; he is God's mouth piece. **When he faces the congregation and the salutation is exchanged, the people know that God is about to deliver a gift through the pastor.**

The salutation occurs several times during the Divine Service. **Each time it focuses our attention on the important action that follows.** In each of these actions God is doing something special for us. Each act of God is an act of grace and blessing. So the salutation occurs at three important times of the Service: before the reading of God's Word, the reception of Holy Communion, and the receiving of the Benediction.

The words of the salutation "The Lord be with you" "And also with you", are first of all a greeting (hence, salutation). It sums up the relationship that the congregation and the pastor share in Jesus Christ. Those who have been baptized receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes up residence in us; therefore **the Lord is with all who have been baptized-congregation and pastor. God's presence then gives them a special bond with each other and with the pastor. This salutation is a reminder of it.**

In some liturgies the people responded with "*And with your Spirit*". This is a fitting response, as it affirms that **we are worshiping in the power of the Holy Spirit**, the Spirit of God who testifies with our spirit that we are children of God (Rom 8:16) and God invites his children to come to him.

But **these words** are more than a greeting; they **are also a blessing**. The pastor blesses the people entrusted to his spiritual care by declaring that the Lord is with them, and the people in turn remind the pastor that the Lord is with him too, as he is a called and ordained servant of the Word (Christ). In its **recognition of the fact that God really is with us** – it is a confession and expression of the name given to Jesus, "Immanuel", God with us. It is appropriate now at this time of the Service since **God is present to speak his Word to us.** Here the pastor is saying, in effect, "May the Lord be with you to help you hear God's Word", and the people respond, "And may he be with you as you read and hear God's Word".

The pastor stands in the congregation as Christ's servant. His vestments cover him, showing that he does not speak on his own behalf, but as one sent and authorized to represent Christ Jesus. When therefore He says, "The Lord be with you," it is no idle statement, it conveys what it says. The Lord is indeed with you. The congregation responds with, "And with thy Spirit." This response of faith, taken from the Scripture, reminds the people that the one standing before them is not there except to minister to them by the Holy Spirit. **This response shows the belief that the pastor stands in the stead of Christ**, and it is God's Spirit which makes holy that pastoral office and gives its authority, not the man. What is more, the response to the pastor's **salutation is also a prayer asking God's Spirit upon the pastor so that he might faithfully continue to do God's work.** Through these responses, pastor and congregation are bound together as they pray the collect.

> **Judges 6 – The Lord Greets Gideon as He Appears to Him to Call Him.**
> **12**And(N) the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, (O) "*The LORD is with you*, O mighty man of valor."

> **Ruth 2 – Boaz Greets the Reapers in His Field**
> **4**And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers,(E) "*The LORD be with you!*" And they answered, "*The LORD bless you*."

> **Luke 1 – Gabriel Greets Mary as He Announces the Coming Birth of Jesus**

[28]And he came to her and said, "Greetings,(BC) O favored one,(BD) *the Lord is with you!*"[c]

Gal. 6 – Paul's Greeting to the Galatians

[18](AF) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be*(AG) *with your spirit*, brothers. Amen.

2 Thess. 3 – Paul's Benediction to the Thessolonians

[16]Now may(Z) the Lord of peace himself(AA) give you peace at all times in every way.(AB) *The Lord be with you all*.

2 Tim. 4 – Paul's Final Greetings to Timothy

[22]*The Lord be*(AS) *with your spirit*.(AT) Grace be with you.[d]

Philemon 1 – Paul's Final Greetings to Philemon

[25](AK) The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ *be with your spirit*.

Phil. 4 – Paul's Blessing on the Phillipians

[23](A) The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ *be with your spirit*.

Collect of the Day

[See this website for an explanation of the Collect and the entire Divine Service: http://lcmspastor.com/oldsite/oldrevalkorn/Worship%20and%20CatWHOLE%20FILE.doc]

The Collect is a short prayer that "collects" in one short petition all it is that we are asking God to do for us on the basis of the Word which we are about to hear read and preached. A collect is a traditional style of prayer that generally follows a specific pattern. The classical pattern for the Collect has five parts:

1. The Address: the name(s) of the Person(s) of the Trinity to whom this prayer is addressed (usually the Father); such as: "Heavenly Father," "Lord God," etc.

2. The Basis/Rationale: the particular characteristic or action of God upon which the prayer is based; such as: "You saved your people from slavery in Egypt," "You are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love," etc.

3. The Petition: the request or purpose of the prayer; such as: "Forgive our sins," etc.

4. The Benefit: the goal or desired outcome of the petition; such as: "That we may know your love and spend eternity with You," etc.

5. The Termination/Doxology: a doxology or praise of God. Prayer through Jesus Christ, who intercedes to the Father for us; to the Father, who grants us our petitions; in the Holy Spirit, who gives us the faith to believe that God will answer our prayers; in their unity as one God forever (John 14:13-14). Note the strong Trinitarian connection; such as "Who lives and reigns...".

Of course, we end every prayer with “Amen” as **a confession of faith that God does indeed hear our prayer and will answer it according to His wisdom and love for us.** The congregation speaks “Amen” to say, “Yes, everything the pastor spoke or chanted on our behalf is what we believe and ask as well.”

The Reading of God’s Word

The Service now turns to the reading of God’s Word, the Scriptures. **Everything that Lutherans believe, teach, and confess is based on the Scriptures. Lutherans view the Bible as God’s Word.** Even though God employed humans to write the various books of the Bible, God is the primary author of the Bible. God the Holy Spirit gave the human writers the very thoughts and words that they used (verbal inspiration).

The reading of the scriptures is one of the high points in the liturgy and is reflective of Lutheran’s high view of the Bible’s inspiration and authority. In the liturgy, the Scriptures are honored as the Word of God. The Word who became flesh to be our Savior (Jesus) does not disdain human words. **As he came to us in the lowliness of our flesh, so he comes to us in human words**, the words given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16). **Through these God-breathed words, God himself is at work to make us "wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."**

> **2 Tim. 3 – All Scripture comes from God**
> 16(A) *All Scripture is breathed out by God* and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17that(B) the man of God[a] may be competent,(C) equipped(D) for every good work.

> **2 Pet. 1 – The Holy Spirit Gave the Writers of Scripture the Very Words They Used**
> 21For(A) no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but *men spoke from God(B) as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*.

> **1 Thess 2 – Scripture is God’s Word**
> 13And(A) we also thank God constantly[a] for this, that when you *received(B) the word of God*, which you heard from us, you accepted it(C) not as the word of men but as *what it really is, the word of God*,(D) which is at work in you believers.

> **John 10 – The Scriptures are Without Error**
> 35…*Scripture cannot be(A) broken—*

The primary purpose that God gave us his Word, the Bible, was to reveal Jesus as the Savior. All of Scripture informs us about Jesus, both the OT and NT. All of Scripture contains both Law and Gospel. The Law shows us our sinful state and the need for a Savior. The Gospel is the Good News that God has sent Jesus, his Son, as the Savior.

Heb. 1 – God's Best and Final Word is Jesus

1 Long ago, at many times and[A] in many ways, God spoke to our
fathers by the prophets, 2 but[B] in these last days[C] *he has spoken*
to us by[D] *his Son*, whom he appointed[E] the heir of all things,[F]
through whom also he created[G] the world.

Luke 24 – All of the OT Informs Us About Jesus

27 And[A] beginning with[B] *Moses and*[C] *all the Prophets*, he
interpreted to them in *all the Scriptures the things concerning*
himself.

John 20 – God Gave Us the Scriptures so That We Might Believe that Jesus is the Savior

31[A] but *these are written so that you may*[B] *believe that Jesus is*
the Christ,[C] the Son of God, and that by believing[D] you may
have life[E] in his name.

John 5 – All of the Scriptures Bear Witness to Jesus

39[A] You search *the Scriptures* because you think that in them you
have eternal life; and[B] it is *they that bear witness about me*,

Acts 10 – All of the OT Prophets are a Witness to Jesus

43[A] *To him*[B] *all the prophets bear witness* that[C] everyone who
believes in him receives[D] forgiveness of sins[E] through his
name."

2 Tim 3 – The Sacred Scriptures Reveal and Offer Salvation in Jesus

15 and how[A] from childhood you have been acquainted with[B] *the*
sacred writings,[C] *which are able to make you wise for salvation*
through faith in Christ Jesus.

Gal. 4 – When the Time was Right God Sent His Son as the Savior

4 But[A] when the fullness of time had come, *God sent forth his*
Son,[B] born[C] of woman, born[D] under the law,

Eph 2 – Jesus is the Cornerstone of Our Faith

20[A] built on the foundation of the[B] apostles and prophets,[C] *Christ*
Jesus himself being[D] *the cornerstone*,

Whenever God's Word is read or heard the Holy Spirit is present and active. **The Holy Spirit uses God's Word to create and strengthen faith in each believer.** The Holy Spirit uses God's Word to create and build the church, the whole body of all believers.

1 Cor. 2 – The Holy Spirit Taught the Words of Scripture

13And we impart this(A) in *words* not taught by human wisdom but *taught by the Spirit*,(B) interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.[a]

2 Pet. 1 – The Holy Spirit Gave the Writers of Scripture the Very Words They Used

21For(A) no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but *men spoke from God(B) as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*.

John 14 – The Holy Spirit Caused the Apostles to Remember Jesus' Words

26But the(A) Helper, *the Holy Spirit*,(B) whom the Father will send in my name,(C) he *will teach* you all things and(D) *bring to your remembrance* all that I have said to you.

God's Word is powerful and creative. God's Word cannot be separated from God himself and therefore it **has the power to create what it says.** As in the beginning when God simply spoke the universe into existence, so God's Word creates faith in us when God speaks his Good News (Gospel) to us that his Son Jesus has won forgiveness of all our sins.

Ro 1 – The Gospel is the Power of God for Salvation

16For I am not ashamed of *the gospel*, for it is *the power of God for salvation* to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Ro. 10 – God Uses His Word to Create Faith

17So(A) faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

God's Word is not just a word spoken long ago to a different group of people. **God's Word is alive and active today.** God's Word throughout the centuries, as recorded in the Bible, is also God's Word for us today. **It has meaning for us and it applies to us.** Each time we hear a Bible story we can insert ourselves into the story by becoming each of the characters. Whether the characters are Pharisees, disciples, kings, servants, children, or parents, we see ourselves in the story and we learn of our sinfulness and God's grace. God's Word convicts us and frees us just as it has done for others throughout the ages.

God's Word is a means of grace; **it is vehicle by which the gracious gifts (undeserved, free gifts) of life and salvation that Jesus won are brought and offered to us.** The faith that the Holy Spirit creates and sustains in us is like an open hand that receives these gifts. Faith trusts that in these gifts God gives us what we need in order to have eternal life with him in heaven.

Heb. 4 – God's Word is Alive. God Speaks to Us Today

12For the word of God is *living and activ**e***, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Ro. 10 – God Uses His Word to Create Faith

17 So[A] faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Is. 55 – God's Word Accomplishes God's Purposes

10[A] "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
[B] giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
11 so shall *my word* be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but[C] *it shall accomplish that which I purpose,*
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Each Sunday has **assigned readings from the OT** (prophets), **the epistles** (apostolic letters), **and the gospels** (evangelists). Over the centuries the church has selected important Scripture verses to be read in the Divine Service. Most churches now follow a three year cycle (lectionary). The cycle is built around the gospels. The first year of the cycle focuses on readings from Matthew. The second year focuses on Mark. And the third year focuses on Luke. Readings from John are scattered throughout the three years. The OT lesson usually ties closely to the gospel lesson. **Using the assigned readings (lectionary) keeps our focus on Jesus, on the perfect life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.**

Some would say that having assigned readings quenches the Spirit, that it does not allow the Spirit to lead us into the truths and way that He would have us go. This charge is based on a misunderstanding of how the Spirit works. The Spirit has chosen to work through certain objective means. The means by which He works are the Means of Grace, the Word and Sacraments. So **whenever God's Word is read, the Holy Spirit is at work**. In the Divine Service the Spirit serves us when God's Word is read. When the Law and Gospel of God's Word is read, the Holy Spirit gives us what we need most, conviction of sin and acquittal because of what Christ has done for us. **In God's Word the Holy Spirit delivers to us the salvation that Jesus won for us.**

The Old Testament Lesson

In the OT God tells how he chose, interacted with, and preserved Israel. **Israel was the nation through which God had decided to send the Savior.** Except for a small faithful remnant, Israel proved to be unfaithful to God. But their unfaithfulness would not derail God's plan of salvation. God remained faithful to his promises and still brought the Savior from her.

In the OT God speaks of the coming Savior (Acts 10:43). The eyes of faith see Jesus in God's OT word as the One who would ultimately crush the serpent, as the One through whom the whole world would be blessed, as the One who would be King forever, as the One who would be the Suffering Servant, as One who would be

pierced for our iniquities, and in all the other OT pictures of Jesus. All prophecies concerning the Savior in the OT are fulfilled in Jesus.

The OT is God's Word which he made known through the prophets (Acts 10:43). The OT was written by the prophets through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit caused these men of God to write down the very words and thoughts that God had given them (verbal inspiration). **In the words of the OT God speaks** as he does the rest of Scripture, **through the demands of the Law and through the sweet promises of the Gospel.**

The relationship between the OT and NT is sometimes described in terms of the relationship of a bud to a flower. As a bud has everything necessary to produce a beautiful flower but has not yet bloomed, so **everything that is in the NT is in the OT, only it has not yet been fully revealed.** The difference between the OT and NT is that in the OT the time had not fully come to completely reveal the Savior. So as the bud gives glimpses of what the flower will look like, so **the OT gives glimpses of the coming Savior.** The OT describes what the Savior will be like when he comes. The NT presents the actual Savior when he came. **The Savior is recognized in the NT because who he is and what he does matches what was foretold of him in the OT.**

After the pastor or reader reads each of the Scripture reading he proclaims, "This is the Word of the Lord." The Lord's Word is embraced by the congregation's response of thanksgiving: "Thanks be to God." **In this way the Church confesses Holy Scripture for what it is - the Word of God**, and it confesses that in the reading of the Word God has just spoken to us.

2 Tim. 3 – All Scripture comes from God

16(A) *All Scripture is breathed out by God* and profitable for
teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in
righteousness, 17that(B) the man of God[a] may be competent,(C)
equipped(D) for every good work.

2 Pet. 1 – The Holy Spirit Gave the Writers of Scripture the Very Words They Used

21For(A) no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but
*men spoke from God(B) as they were carried along by the Holy
Spirit*.

2 Tim 3 – The Sacred Scriptures Reveal and Offer Salvation in Jesus

15and how(A) from childhood you have been acquainted with(B) *the
sacred writings,(C) which are able to make you wise for salvation
through faith in Christ Jesus.*

Heb. 4 – God's Word is Alive. God Speaks to Us Today

12For the word of God is *living and activ**e***, sharper than any two-
edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of
joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions
of the heart.

Acts 10 – The OT bear witness to Jesus

43(BJ) *To him(BK) all the prophets bear witness* that(BL) everyone who believes in him receives(BM) forgiveness of sins(BN) through his name."

Gradual

The Gradual is named that way because in ancient times the pastor would sing it from a step (Latin: “gradus”) of the altar. In the past Graduals were longer, but today for Lutherans, it is **a verse or verses that are taken from the Scriptures that reflect the theme of the day or season of the church year**. The gradual is a bridge of praise that connects the Old Testament life (as reflected in the OT lesson) and New Testament life (as reflected in the Epistle lesson) to Christ. The Gradual may be sung by the pastor, the choir, the congregation, or a cantor.

The Epistle Lesson

“Epistle” means letter. So the Epistle lesson is **a reading that comes from one of the letters written by the apostles.** Each of these letters was written to a specific person or church. An apostle is one who was “sent out” by Jesus. Jesus sent them out to proclaim the Good News that he is the Savior and that through his death and resurrection he has won forgiveness of sin for all people. **In their letters then, the apostles wrote about the Good News of Jesus Christ and what that meant for and how that affected the daily lives of people.**

The Epistle read is part of the lectionary of assigned readings. Many times the Epistle is not directly related to the OT or Gospel readings. **The emphasis of the epistles is on the work of the Lord through His apostles in the early Church. As the Word of Lord grew and the church expanded, the apostles had to explain the truths of the Christian faith and its effect on people and how they lived.**

The letters written by the apostles are a part of the Holy Scriptures. They are God’s Word just as the OT books and gospels are God’s Word. God the Holy Spirit caused these men, who walked with and were taught by Jesus, to record and preserved these letters for the church. **In them God gives us the truth about Jesus Christ and what it means for our faith and life.**

2 Tim. 3 – All Scripture comes from God

16(A) *All Scripture is breathed out by God* and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17that(B) the man of God[a] may be competent,(C) equipped(D) for every good work.

2 Pet. 1 – The Holy Spirit Gave the Writers of Scripture the Very Words They Used

21For(A) no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but *men spoke from God(B) as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit*.

Ro 1 – The Gospel is the Power of God for Salvation

16For I am not ashamed of *the gospel*, for it is *the power of God for salvation* to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

1 Cor. 2 – The Holy Spirit Taught the Words of Scripture

13And we impart this(A) in *words* not taught by human wisdom but *taught by the Spirit*,(B) interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.[a]

The Alleluia Verse

The Hebrew word "Alleluia" means "praise the Lord". The Alleluia Verse is sung with joy and triumph because **it looks forward to the reading of the Gospel in which our risen Lord himself speaks to us**. Jesus' words, which we are about to hear, bring and offer to us eternal life. So we look forward to them with great anticipation. Sometimes, like we do in the *Kyrie*, we say the Alleluia three times to honor and praise the three Persons of the Trinity.

The Alleluia Verse is taken from John 6 where some of Jesus' disciples had left and stopped following him. Then *"Jesus said to(CX) the Twelve, 'Do you want to go away as well?' 8Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have(CY) the words of eternal life, 69and(CZ) we have believed, and have come to know, that(DA) you are(DB) the Holy One of God.'"* **Just like Jesus' twelve disciples, we have come to believe that Jesus is the Holy One of God and we now eagerly await his words to us, for they are "the words of eternal life."**

In singing the Alleluia, **we sing directly to the Lord Jesus.** For we recognize that he is present with us and is bringing the Good News of the Gospel personally to us. **It is a confession of Jesus' real presence in the Word and of the real gifts that he offers us through the Word**, that is, forgiveness, life, and salvation. We sing filled with joy and faith.

We omit the Alleluia during Lent because of the penitential nature of the season. Instead of reflecting on the praise of the Lord, we reflect on His suffering and death. A verse such as *Return to the Lord God* may be sung instead as it focuses on repentance.

John 6 – Jesus has the Words of Eternal Life

68Simon Peter answered him, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have(CY) the words of eternal life*, 69and(CZ) we have believed, and have come to know, that(DA) you are(DB) the Holy One of God."

Joel 2 – A Verse Encouraging Repentance Used During Lent

13Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

The Gospel Lesson

[For the next paragraph see http://www.ctsfw.edu/Document.Doc?id=260]

The Holy Gospel is the chief reading in the Service of the Word. Here Christ himself speaks to his congregation (through the pastor) imparting to his people words of blessing and salvation. The first two readings function as the voice of John the Baptist, preparing us to hear in repentance and faith, the living voice of our Good Shepherd, Jesus. The Holy Gospel is rightly seen as the summit of the Service of the Word. This we recognize by surrounding the reading of our Savior's words with acclamations of glory ("Glory to you, O Lord") and praise ("Praise to you, O Christ") and by standing to receive these gracious words.

First, the Gospel lesson is announced. The congregation rises and extols his glory, acknowledging the Lord's presence. Before Jesus speaks his Gospel to us, the congregation sings, "Glory to you, O Lord." In the Gospel Jesus comes to us bringing his gift of eternal life, so **in anticipation we stand and give him glory for his coming and his word of truth that we are about to hear.**

The Gospel lesson is one of the high points of the Divine Service, ranking up there with the sermon and the Sacrament of the Altar in importance. As such, it has long been accompanied by appropriate actions. A **Gospel procession** might precede the reading of the lesson, a procession in which the Crucifer would lead the acolytes, the pastor, and an assistant carrying the Gospel book into the midst of the congregation. The Gospel may appropriately be read in the midst of the people, even as Christ humbled Himself to become flesh and walked among us as one of us. It is always given **the place of honor as the last reading**. **Special honor has always been accorded to the Gospel reading**, as it reveals the words and works of our Lord as the living Word ever-present in the written Word.

Then the Gospel is read. The Gospel selection is the clearest proclamation of the theme for the given day. The reading is a selection from the words that the Evangelists recorded in the four gospels about the life and ministry of Jesus and **focuses our attention on the words and works of our Lord.**, with the Old Testament or (usually) the Epistle reading being the text for the meditation at the evening Vespers service.

In the Gospel lesson, we hear the Good News of how Christ has fulfilled the Old Testament. All OT prophecies and OT types are fulfilled in Jesus. **The Gospel of Jesus Christ is also the meat of our faith.** Its focus is completely on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith. And so it provides the basis for the epistles as well, as they spell out true doctrine and correct living for God's people.

In the Gospel lesson we have heard the words of Jesus about his life and work of redemption. The words are Jesus' own words and in them he comes to us and makes his home with us (Jn. 14:23). **In the Gospel God is present** not just because of his omnipresence (present everywhere), he has a special localized presence within those who abide in his Word. Concerning Christ's real presence in God's Word, Luther would make the statement and ask the question, **"He is there, is he there for you?"**

In the Gospel lesson, Jesus' words have rung in our ears. We have heard of His marvelous deeds for us and our salvation, and so, **the congregation responds in joyous praise singing, "Praise be to Thee, O Christ."** In doing so, we again acknowledge Christ's presence with us in His Word and that Christ is most worthy of praise because of all that he has done for us.

Ro. 1 – God's Word is God's Power to Save

16 For[A] I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is[B] the power of
God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew[C] first and
also to[D] the Greek.

John 6 – Jesus, the Holy One of God, has the Words of Eternal Life

68 Simon Peter answered him, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? You
have*[CY] *the words of eternal life*, 69 and[CZ] we have believed, and
have come to know, that[DA] you are[DB] the Holy One of God."

John 20 – Believing in Jesus Gives Life

31[A] but *these are written so that you may*[B] *believe that Jesus is
the Christ*,[C] the Son of God, and that by believing[D] you may
have life[E] in his name.

John 14 – Jesus is Present in His Word

23 Jesus answered him, [AV] "If anyone loves me, he will keep *my
word*, and my Father will love him, and[AW] *we will come to him
and*[AX] *make our home with him*. 24 Whoever does not love me
does not keep my words. And[AY] *the word that you hear* is not
mine but the Father's who sent me.

The Hymn of the Day

In some settings the Hymn of the Day and the Creed come next before the Sermon, while in other settings the Sermon comes next followed by the Hymn of the Day and the Creed. In some churches the Creed comes before the Hymn.

Having just heard Jesus and his Word in the Gospel (and possibly in the Sermon depending on the setting), we respond in a hymn of faith and love. This hymn is called the Hymn of the Day or the Office or Sermon hymn and is the primary hymn of the Service. It is chosen very carefully. **It usually restates in song the Gospel reading just read and heard. It reflects the theme being stressed this day in the Service and in the lessons.**

As we sing this hymn, we should think about how it **relates to the readings**, and also consider how the ideas in the hymn are **echoed in the sermon**. The Hymn of the Day is God's Word written in poetry and set to music. The Hymn is another way of proclaiming the Good News of the gospel.

The Hymn of the Day was added to the liturgy by Lutherans. It had been used in the daily prayers and was brought into the liturgy as **another way of proclaiming the Gospel**. The Gospel was read, the Gospel is preached, and **in the Hymn of the Day the Gospel is sung.**

The Hymn of the Day teams up with the Creed and both are **used as a ruler to measure the Sermon.** When held up next to the Sermon, it answers the question, “Did or does the Sermon preach the Gospel?”

The Creed

Having heard the Word of God and God’s mighty deeds for us in Christ, we confess our faith in Him. The Creed is our saying back to God what He has first said to us, what is most true about Him, as He has revealed it to us. **In the Nicene and Apostle’s Creed, we acclaim the truth of the Triune God and His work of salvation accomplished for us in His Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ.**

“Who do you say I am?” Jesus put this question to his disciples (Mt. 16:13) and today he **addresses it to us** and his Church as well. Peter answered with the brief confession: “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*”, and over the years this central statement of faith has grown into the Apostle’s and Nicene Creed.

The word “Creed” is Latin for “Credo”, meaning “I believe”. It is a statement of both personal and corporate faith. Three main factors lie behind the emergence of the Creeds: **(1)** the need for an orthodox statement of faith to **challenge the threat of heresy** (false teaching); **(2)** the need to **teach** converts and prepare them for baptism, Holy Communion and life in the Church; and **(3)** the need to **witness before the world** what the Church actually believes.

The creed was placed near the sermon on purpose. It is used like a ruler. It is a **measuring stick of truth for the sermon**. If the pastor in his sermon says anything that contradicts any part of the creed, then he is guilty of false teaching. This is true whether the creed is confessed before or after the sermon. Whether before or after, the congregation is saying, **“We expect you to preach according to these basic truths.”**

The Nicene Creed in particular is the result of a controversy that troubled the Church for most of the fourth century. In response to the teaching of Arius, who denied that Jesus is truly God, **the Nicene Creed categorically affirms the truth that Jesus Christ is “God** from God, Light from Light, true God from true God” and “of one being with the Father”. Connected with this central truth, the Nicene Creed also confesses the triune nature of God: he is one God in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The word “Nicene” is taken from the ancient city of Nicea, where in 325 AD an early form of this Creed was adopted. From the 11th century onwards the Nicene Creed became a regular feature of the Divine Service.

The first Christian creed was simply, “Jesus is Lord” (Phil. 2:10). The word, “LORD” was a euphemism for “Yahweh,” God’s name in the Old Testament. So this creed was saying, “Jesus is the same God Who saved Israel from Egypt.”

The creeds are “confessional statements,” or expressions of agreement. In essence, we’re saying, **“This is what all Christians believe,”** or, “This is the definition of the Christian faith. If you don’t believe these basic teachings, by definition, you can’t honestly call yourself a Christian.” They were written as much to confess what we *don’t* believe as what we do believe. They were formed during times of struggle in the church to refute the claims of those within the church who were spreading false

teachings, and yet, as we'll see, still apply today and speak against modern false teachers as well.

These creeds, besides refuting false teachings, **proclaim God's love**. Try this sometime: after almost every line of the creed, say to yourself, "For me" or "For us," because *every* interaction God has ever had with His creation has been out of love for us. He became our Lord, not because we deserve Him, but because of His love. He gave us His Holy Spirit, the church, and everything else mentioned in the creed purely out of His mercy and goodness, not by any merit on our part.

When we weekly confess these creeds, we join our voices with all Christians past, present, and future, proclaiming to each other, the world, and ourselves **a short summary of what God has revealed about Himself in His Word** (just heard in the readings and preached in the sermon). Our God is not a secret, unknowable God. He has demonstrated that He is a "hands on" God, even when it meant having those hands pierced for our sin so that we may spend eternity with Him and know Him in a way we can't even imagine now.

What the Church believes, she confesses with her lips in creeds. **The Nicene Creed and the Apostle's Creed are the Church's reply to God's Word, the public acceptance and confession in summary form of the faith of the whole Church, and a rejection of all the heresies that it condemns.** As Jesus says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33). Every use of it is, in a sense, a renewal of our Baptismal vow. It binds all true Christians to one another, and to the faithful of all centuries. The Creed can also be sung (TLH 251; LW 212, 213). It is appropriate to make the sign of the cross at the last phrase in remembrance of your Baptism.

On Trinity Sunday it is customary and appropriate to confess the Athanasian Creed (TLH p.53; LW p.134). As Paul says, "For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved." (Romans 10:10). **The Athanasian Creed spells out in detail that there is only one true God and he is the Triune God.** Within God are three persons, each being equal and coexisting with the others, and each being part of the Godhead. It tries to define in human language the great mystery of one God yet three persons.

Mt. 16 – Who is Jesus?

13(A) Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi,
he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man
is?"

Mt. 16 – Beware of False Teachers

11How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about
bread?(Q) Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."
12(R) Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of
the leaven of bread, but of(S) the teaching of the Pharisees and
Sadducees.

Mt. 10 – Christians Confess Jesus Before Men

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).

Rom. 10 – What We Believe We Confess With Our Mouth

10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Phil 2 – Everyone Should Confess Jesus as Lord

9 (S) Therefore (T) God has (U) highly exalted him and bestowed on him (V) the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus (W) every knee should bow, (X) in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and (Y) every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is (Z) Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1Tim 3 – Confession of Jesus

16 Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness:

(Y) He [e] was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated [f] by the Spirit, [g]

(Z) seen by angels,
(AA) proclaimed among the nations,
(AB) believed on in the world,

(AC) taken up in glory.

1Cor 15 – Basis of Second Article

3 For (F) I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died (G) for our sins (H) in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised (I) on the third day (J) in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that (K) he appeared to Cephas, then (L) to the twelve.

The Sermon

In continuity with the prophets (OT lesson), apostles (Epistle lesson), and evangelists (Gospel lesson), our **pastor stands in our midst to deliver the Lord's Law and Gospel in the sermon**. He is God's mouth for the congregation as through him the Good Shepherd's voice sounds forth to call, gather and enlighten His flock.

In the Sermon, the preacher "rightly divides (or interprets) the Word of truth" (2Tim. 2:15). The Sermon contains elements of the two great doctrines of the Bible: the Law, which tells us how we are to live, and the Gospel, which proclaims forgiveness of our sins, by grace, through faith, for Christ's sake. **The Gospel predominates in the Sermon**. The Sermon usually relates to the lessons of the day.

[For next 4 paragraphs see http://www.lcmspastor.com/files/1-08%20Liturgy6.doc]

When you walk into a Lutheran Church, the two primary objects your eye will likely fall on are the altar and the pulpit. These emphasize the importance of the Word (the pulpit, where the pastor preaches the sermon) and sacraments (the altar, from which Holy Communion is distributed). Though smaller than in the past, **the pulpit has always been large to emphasize the importance of the Word of God**, **because this message gives us eternal life.** When the pastor stands above everyone to preach, it's not to "look down on" the congregation, but to "hold high" the Word of God. So the large pulpit is not a sign of the pastor's importance, but of the Bible's importance.

When the pastor preaches the sermon, he is to hold strictly to the Word of God. While illustrations can be used (as Jesus used parables to teach), **the primary message of a sermon must be rooted in the Word of God, and specifically in the Gospel**.

The entire service, and especially the sermon, consists of a division of Law and Gospel. The Law is what God would have us do and how we've failed to live up to His expectations. The Gospel tells us what God has done on our behalf through Jesus Christ. A proper sermon includes both of these. If the sermon is only Law, the congregation leaves feeling inadequate or self-righteous. If a sermon contains only Gospel, the Gospel has no power, since we don't need salvation if we have no sin as revealed by the Law. **Because we "preach nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified," every Christian sermon should refer to and center in Jesus Christ and the love and salvation God has given us through Him.** Many people think of a proper sermon telling how to live, but God's primary message for us is not our actions, but His love, and as He gives faith through that message, we naturally respond in faith. The sermon also need not create an emotional response. Different people respond differently to different messages, so sometimes, you may feel moved by a particular expression of God's Word, while other times, it won't trigger your emotions. That's OK. **The purpose of a sermon is not to feed emotions—it's to feed faith.** If you have an emotional reaction, that's fine, but understand that **the primary goal of a sermon is to strengthen you to withstand the attacks of the devil, the world, and your own sinful flesh.**

Notice that there's a difference between preaching and teaching, and the Bible uses different words for the two. **Preaching (a sermon) is proclamation of a message**, like a village herald walking through town with a megaphone, proclaiming the news. While you may learn from it, and hopefully you regularly do learn something new or see God from a new perspective, proclamation is very different from teaching, and the two depend on each other. Teaching (a Bible class, etc.) allows the participants to dig into a text or teaching, to discuss and ask questions, and to focus on specific aspects of a teaching that are just too detailed for a sermon. If you're only hearing the sermon and not engaging the Bible through some kind of study, you're only getting half of the message, like reading the headlines of a newspaper but never the entire article. At the same time, if you only study the Bible and never listen to a sermon, you're also only cheating yourself, because the sermon focuses on God's specific message to *you*.

The sermon, delivered by the pastor, is **an explanation of the Word of God, and an application of that Word to the lives of Christians**. It stresses both what God demands of us (the Law) and what God has done and is doing for us (the Gospel).

Before the pastor begins the sermon, he will either stand or kneel before the altar, and pray that his words will be pleasing to God and edifying to the congregation. When he steps into the pulpit, he begins with the Apostolic Greeting: “Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:2). He may then read the text, and will then preach the sermon.

The sermon is neither easy to listen to nor necessarily entertaining. It is both discomforting and comforting, but it is never comfortable. **The goal** is not to make the listener feel good about himself, but that **he should die to himself, and rise to faith**.

After the sermon, the preacher may conclude with the words of Philippians 4:7: “The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” This is called the “*votum*.” This verse **invokes the promised blessing of peace** upon all that stand fast in the Lord and worship Him. It fittingly concludes this section of the Office of the Word and leads into the Offertory.

The sermon should never be omitted. The pastor has two main responsibilities: the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. To omit one is to neglect that responsibility to the care of the souls of those who have been entrusted to him, and he must answer for that before God.

Mark 16 – Preach the Gospel so that it may be believed

16 (A) Whoever believes and is (B) baptized (C) will be saved, but (D) whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Ro 1 – The preached Gospel is the power of God for salvation.

16 For (A) I am not ashamed of the gospel, for *it is* (B) *the power of God* for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew (C) first and also to (D) the Greek.

Luke 24 – Good preaching proclaims repentance and forgiveness

47 and that (A) *repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed* (B) in his name (C) to all nations, (D) beginning from Jerusalem.

1 Cor 1 - Preach Christ crucified

22 For (A) Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but *we preach Christ* (B) *crucified*, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

2 Cor 5 - Preach that reconciliation comes through Christ

18 All this is from God, (AB) who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us (AC) the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling [c] the world to himself, (AD) not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us (AE) the *message of reconciliation*.

Lk 3 – Preach the Good News

[18]So with many other exhortations he *preached good news* to the people.

Acts 17 – Preach Jesus and the Resurrection

[18] Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babbler wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"—because he was *preaching Jesus and the resurrection*.

The Offering and Offertory

[Parts of this section are based on: https://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/Worship/Kleinig-Holiness%20and%20Worship.doc and http://www.lcmspastor.com/files/2-08%20Liturgy7.doc]

Jesus has brought us into the Father's presence, spoken to us in the readings and the sermon, and **now gives us access to the Father (Eph 2:17-18) and causes us, through his Spirit, to respond to Gospel by faith.** Having heard the Good News of eternal life and forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ, the congregation **responds in faith and thankfulness by offering ourselves, our treasures, and our time**. The motivation behind giving an offering is a unique aspect of Christianity. We don't give to gain God's favor. He has already saved us, even before we had a chance to do anything for Him or anyone else. We give because we recognize that all that we have, both spiritually and physically, has been given to us by God. **We give out of gratitude for all that God has done and continues to for us.**

As holy people who share in Christ's holiness we have a holy vocation (2 Tim 1:9), a heavenly calling (Heb 3:1). We have been called to serve the triune God as his holy priests, people who bring others and their needs to God, people who bring God and his blessings to others. **This means that we can use our holy status and our access to God's grace for the benefit of others.** Most people on earth do not have faith in Christ and do not have access to God's grace through their faith in Christ. But we do. We can therefore stand in for them and represent them before God the Father as we present our holy offerings to him for ourselves and for them.

There are many aspects to the offering. We give the first and best of what God has given to us (like Abel in Gen 4). We give it out of thanksgiving and we give it trusting that God will provide for all our needs. The Bible often speaks of **"firstfruits" giving**, that is, setting aside a portion of your income before determining the rest of your budget. This act of faith says, "God, you have given me all good gifts, and I trust that you will continue to provide for me, so before I worry about my needs, I set these gifts aside for my neighbor and for use in your kingdom."

Our offerings are most pleasing to God, because they are produced by the Holy Spirit and offered to God the Father together with Jesus our great High Priest (1 Pet 2:5). They are holy and acceptable because they are sanctified by the word of God and prayer (1 Tim 4:3-5).

As holy priests we present three kinds of offerings to our heavenly Father, offerings with our hearts and hands and voices: 1) the offering of ourselves, 2) the offerings of what we produce by our work, and 3) the offering of our mouths. In the **Offertory** we forgiven sinners **present ourselves and our bodies as living sacrifices** for re-creation and renewal as God's holy servants. In the **Offering** we present **some of our money** as a communal offering for consecration by God and use in his holy service. In the **Prayer of the Church** we present **our intercessions for the church, the world, and people in need**. This. says Luther, is our 'unique office and function' as God's holy priests; by our intercession for the world we become 'the gods and saviors of the world' (LW 24, 87). These three kinds of offerings are presented together with Christ. They are our priestly service in the holy liturgy, our holy service of God **on behalf of all humanity and for its well being**, our service for the world.

We give to help our neighbors, especially those who do not know Christ. **We give to support the proclamation of the Good News** in our community and to the ends of the earth that all may know the love God has given us. The offering is a great act of compassion for our fellow man, knowing that God will bless the work accomplished with those funds.

In the Old Testament, the required offering was a tithe (10% of a person's income). In the New Testament, that command changed to **"Give cheerfully and willingly**" (2 Cor 9:6-7). Many Christians follow the 10% recommendation, while others see the blessings of giving beyond 10%, as the Lord has blessed them. While for others, 10% is too difficult.

The Offertory and Offering are **a transition between the Service of the Word and the Service of Holy Communion.** We do look back upon the message and meaning of the Gospel and use it as motivation for giving, but we also begin to direct our thoughts forward to the celebration and reception of the Sacrament.

We can make offerings to the Father because we have been joined to Christ in Baptism. **We can only approach the Father through Jesus** (Heb. 7:25). When Christ offers himself, we offer ourselves as living sacrifices (Ro. 12:1-12). When Christ makes intercession, we make intercession (pray for others). Jesus sanctifies us and our sacrifices making them acceptable to God (1 Pet 2:5). They are "spiritual" sacrifices because they are motivated by faith in Jesus and are produced in us by his Holy Spirit.

Eph 2:17-18 – Access to the Father through the Spirit

"Jesus came and proclaimed peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off and peace to you (Jews) who were near, for through him both of us have **access** in one Spirit **to the Father**."

Gen 4 – Give Your First and Best

3In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of[A] the fruit of the ground, **4**and Abel also brought of[B] the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD[C] had regard for Abel and his offering,

1 Pet 2:5 – Our Sacrifices are Acceptable Through Jesus

5(A) you yourselves like living stones are being built up as(B) a
spiritual house, to be(C) a holy priesthood,(D) to offer spiritual
sacrifices(E) acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

1 Tim 4 – God's Word and Prayer Make All Created Things Holy

3(A) who forbid marriage and(B) require abstinence from foods(C) that
God created(D) to be received with thanksgiving by those who
believe and know the truth. 4For(E) everything created by God is
good, and(F) nothing is to be rejected if it is(G) received with
thanksgiving, 5for it is made holy(H) by the word of God and
prayer.

Ro 12 – Present Your Bodies as Living Sacrifices

1(A) I appeal to you therefore, brothers,[a] by the mercies of God,(B)
to present your bodies(C) as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable
to God, which is your spiritual worship.[b]

2 Cor 9:6-7 – Give Bountifully, Cheerfully, and from the Heart

6The point is this:(AJ) whoever sows sparingly will also reap
sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully[h] will also reap
bountifully. 7Each one must give as he has decided in his heart,(AK)
not reluctantly or under compulsion, for(AL) God loves a cheerful
giver.

Heb 7 – We Approach the Father through Jesus

25Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost[a](A) those who
draw near to God(B) through him, since he always lives(C) to make
intercession for them.

The Offering

[See this site for an explanation of the offering and the entire Divine Service: http://lcmspastor.com/oldsite/oldrevalkorn/Worship%20and%20CatWHOLE%20FILE.doc]

Our faith shows itself in the works we do. This includes the **giving of gifts to the Lord for the work of His Church**, so that the Church may provide the spoken and written Word, Christian education, and pastoral care to the community and to the world. Therefore, in the Offering we are given the opportunity to return to God the first and finest portion of the blessings He has given us, even as we see Abel doing in Genesis 4. Paul says in II Corinthians: "But this I say, He which sows sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which sows bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loves a cheerful giver" (vv. 6-7). In addition to **a sign of faith**, the giving of gifts is a show of **thankfulness to God** for the gifts He has bestowed on us, both physically and spiritually.

Monetary gifts are not the whole of Christian giving, but are a significant part of it. Often giving includes the **bread and wine** for the Sacrament, **flowers** for the

church, or the offering of **time and talent** in service to the Church. As Paul says in Romans: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (12:1). In earlier times, the gifts brought forward at this time also included clothing, produce, livestock, and other necessities for the Pastor’s family and the needy of the community.

God has given his very self for us on the cross. In the Offering, can we give any less than ourselves to him? **He has given his very life for us. In return we give our whole selves and all we have to the Lord.**

Usually the altar and the elements are prepared for the Lord’s Supper at this time, although some will delay this preparation until the singing of the *Sanctus*. Either practice is appropriate. In ancient times some of the bread and wine brought for the offering were brought forward for use in the Lord’s Supper. **As bread and wine were essential for daily physical life, now they become essential for our spiritual life.** Later in the Lord’s Supper, after the bread and wine were consecrated, they were given back to the people by God to give them eternal life.

In some cases during the Offering, the Pastor will enter the Sacristy to clothe himself in a garment called a “chasuble,” a garment that is meant to further obscure the man in the Office of the Ministry and rather emphasize Christ as the source of the Holy Supper.

1 Corinthians 16:1-4 – Give First to God and on a Regular Basis

1 Now concerning[a](A) the collection for the saints: as I directed the
churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. 2 On(B) the first day of
every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it
up,(C) as he may prosper,(D) so that there will be no collecting
when I come. 3 And when I arrive, I will send(E) those whom you
accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems
advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

2 Corinthians 8:5-7 – Give Yourself to God and then to Others

5 and this, not as we expected, but they(A) gave themselves first to
the Lord and then by the will of God to us. 6 Accordingly,(B) we
urged Titus that as he had started, so he should complete
among you(C) this act of grace. 7 But as(D) you excel in everything—
in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our
love for you[a]—(E) see that you excel in this act of grace also.

2 Cor 9:6-7 – Give Bountifully, Cheerfully, and from the Heart

6 The point is this:(AJ) whoever sows sparingly will also reap
sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully[h] will also reap
bountifully. 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart,(AK)
not reluctantly or under compulsion, for(AL) God loves a cheerful
giver.

1 Chronicles 29:14 – We Give Back to God What He has First Given to Us

14"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able
thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your
own have we given you.

Hebrews 13 – Sacrifices of Praise, Doing Good, and Sharing

15(Y) Through him then let us continually offer up(Z) a sacrifice of
praise to God, that is,(AA) the fruit of lips that acknowledge his
name. 16Do not neglect to do good and(AB) to share what you have,
for such(AC) sacrifices are pleasing to God.

The Offertory - “Create in Me a Clean Heart”

In the offertory we respond to the Word we have just heard in the readings and sermon and ask God to continue bestowing forgiveness and a new spirit. For it is only after God has worked on and in us, changing us, that we can respond to his grace. **Beginning with our Baptism, he has created a clean heart and new spirit within us and we ask that he will continue to do so.** We have no ability to do this, so we ask for this gift and God gives it to us as He promises.

Paul says the 13th chapter of the letter to the Hebrews: “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (v. 15). **Thus a song of praise is connected to the act of giving a gift.**

“Create in Me” is taken from Ps. 51, David’s psalm of repentance. David had committed adultery and murder. God sent the prophet Nathan to speak his word of Law to David, to reveal David’s sin to him. Recognizing his sin, his unclean heart and wrong spirit, David does not turn inward to take care of it. Instead **he turns outward to God**. Only a loving, faithful, merciful God can create in him and us a clean heart that has love of God and neighbor as its focus. **Only God’s Spirit can breathe life into our spirits and cleanse our unclean hearts.** Only God’s Spirit can give us the joy of God’s salvation in Christ.

In Baptism God created a clean heart in us and gave us his Holy Spirit. A clean heart and right spirit cause us to desire God’s presence, his Holy Spirit, and his gift of salvation and the joy it invokes. **Therefore our request in this verse looks forward to Holy Communion.** There in his holy presence we ask that through his Holy Spirit he continue to cleanse our hearts and give us a right spirit that joyfully and willingly looks to the salvation that the Son has won for us.

Ps 51 – Create in Me a Clean Heart and Renew a Right Spirit

10(T) Create in me a(U) clean heart, O God,
and(V) renew a right[b] spirit within me.
11(W) Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not(X) your Holy Spirit from me.
12Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

The Offertory - “What Shall I Render to the Lord”

Another version of the Offertory comes from Ps. 116. It begins with a question, “What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me?” Or in other words, what can I give the LORD in order to repay him for all that he has done for me? No answer is given, but the implied answer is nothing! **We can’t begin to pay him back for all that he has done for us. All we can do is joyfully receive all that he gives to us.** All we can do is receive his gifts with gratitude and make it clear to everyone around us that all of our blessings come from the LORD (LORD=Yahweh-God’s OT name), the Triune God, the only true God. We do this by publically thanking him, by publically calling upon his holy name. We do this by keeping our vows to the LORD. As Christians we vow to worship the one true God, to proclaim the truth that he is the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. And we promise to do these things in the presence of all of God’s people. In the offertory and in the Divine Service we do all of this and we do it publically and we do in the midst of and with all of God’s people.

This thanksgiving, acceptance, and praise of the Triune God is not just given at the Divine Service. As Christians our entire **lives are lives of thanksgiving and praise to God**, lives lived responding to God’s gracious gifts. For all people that come in contact with us, it is clear-we are Christians. And as Christians we acknowledge before others that there is only one true God. We acknowledge our sinfulness and that we deserve to be punished for it. But we also acknowledge that God’s wrath against sin was diverted from us to Jesus. Jesus provides us with the cup of salvation while he drank from the cup of God’s wrath. We respond with thanksgiving and praise to God.

The Offertory is also a transition from the Service of the Word to the Service of Holy Communion. “What shall I render to the Lord” looks forward to Holy Communion. In Communion we drink the very blood of Christ from the cup of salvation. When we call someone’s name, we are calling that person. In Communion we call on the Triune God to save us. The Father invites to his table. The Son waits on us and provides us the Holy Meal, the Cup of Salvation and the Bread of Life. And the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts to receive these gifts. **We receive the cup and call on God’s name in the presence of God’s people.** Another word for Holy Communion is Eucharist, which means thanksgiving. Since we can never repay God for the gift of salvation, we do the only thing we can do, which is **offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise God**.

Psalm 116:12-14, 17-19

12 What shall I[A] render to the LORD
for all his benefits to me?
13 I will lift up[B] the cup of salvation
and[C] call on the name of the LORD,
14 I will[D] pay my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.
...
17 I will[A] offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
and[B] call on the name of the LORD.
18 I will[C] pay my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people,
19 in[D] the courts of the house of the LORD,

in your midst, O Jerusalem.
(E) Praise the LORD!

The Prayer of the Church

[A portion of this section is based on: http://www.holycrosskc.org/learn-and-grow/the-divine-service-overview/.]

This prayer is called the Prayer of the Church for in it the royal priesthood of all believers (Christians), in God's presence, **does its priestly work of making "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving for all men**, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way." (1 Timothy 2:1). The Prayer of the Church includes:

- Thanksgiving and praise for the blessings of God given in the Word which the congregation has heard.
- Prayers for the whole church.
- The nation.
- The world.
- Those in need.
- Special concerns of the parish.
- Thanksgiving for the faithful departed.

In addition to praying for the nations and people of the world, the Prayer of the Church is **an act of intercession** (a request on behalf of another) by the assembled congregation for itself and for the whole Church. Intercessions are offered for: (1) all the people of God (Eph. 6:17,18); (2) the work of pastors and missionaries as well as the reception of the Gospel preached by them (Rom. 15:30-32; 2 Cor. 1:11; Eph. 6:19; Col. 4:3-4; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1-2; Heb. 13:18); (3) the sending out of pastors and missionaries to do God's work (Matt. 9:35-38); and (4) its own needs (Phil. 4:6: Col. 4:2).

Prayer is one of the most important acts of the faithful gathered in worship. **Our prayers include the Holy Christian Church, our congregation, our district and the Synod**, as well as those called to serve at those levels, our nation and its leaders, **the nations of the world, and people in every kind of need** (e.g. homeless, addicted, lonely, despairing, wavering in the faith, etc.). We pray for peaceful times, good weather, a godly society, and on and on. Through these prayers we are serving our neighbors and the whole world.

[for next two paragraphs see: http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=844]

Prayers have long been offered to God by God's people. Prayers were offered, in addition to sacrifice, at the First Temple in Jerusalem both for the monarchy and for the nation (1 Chron. 16:7-36; 2 Chron. 7:12-16). At the Second Temple God's people offered both public sacrifices and prayers for the Persian king and his family (Ezra 6:9-10). In the synagogues in the post-exilic period, prayer became a central focus of public worship. In the New Testament, public corporate prayer is affirmed by Jesus

(Matt. 18:18-20) and based on his own intercession before God the Father (Heb. 4:14-16; 7:25). Public prayer was an essential component of the Church's worship (Acts 2:42). Sts. Paul and Peter urged the recipients of their letters to intercede for all people and especially those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1-6; 1 Pet. 2:17). Readers are also asked to pray for all the saints (Eph. 6:17-18) and all the ministers of the gospel (Rom. 15:30-32; Eph. 6:19-20; Col. 4:2-4; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1-2; Heb. 13:18). There is evidence from the first century A.D. that the Roman government exempted Jews from involvement in the imperial cult, partially because Jews also offered daily sacrifices and prayers for the emperor and not only for themselves.

The place of the Prayer of the Church in Lutheran public worship also indicates its nature. Traditionally placed after the reading of God's Word and the preaching of the sermon, **it grows out of God's Word and expresses the faith that is generated by the preaching of God's Word**. It echoes and employs the language and imagery of the Scriptures that have been given not only to generate faith but also to guide the saints in prayer. The Prayer of the Church is part of our corporate offering to God the Father through the Son. Hence, it is associated with the collection of monetary gifts and also prepares for the gifts which God gives in and through the Sacrament of the Altar.

1 Tim 2 – Pray for all people and leaders

1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers,
intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 (A) for
kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a
peaceful and quiet life, godly and (B) dignified in every way.

Acts 2 – Early NT Worship Included Prayers

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and
fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Eph 6 – Pray for All the Saints and for the Preaching of the Gospel

17 and take (A) the helmet of salvation, and (B) the sword of the Spirit,
which is the word of God, 18 praying (C) at all times (D) in the Spirit, (E)
with all prayer and supplication. To that end (F) keep alert with all
perseverance, making (G) supplication for all the saints, 19 and (F) also
for me, that words may be given to me in opening my mouth (G)
boldly to proclaim (H) the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I (I) am
an ambassador (J) in chains, that I may declare it boldly, as I
ought to speak.

Rom 15 –Pray for Ministers

30 I appeal to you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by (A) the
love of the Spirit, (B) to strive together with me in your prayers to
God on my behalf, 31 (C) that I may be delivered from the
unbelievers in Judea, and that (D) my service for Jerusalem may be
acceptable to the saints, 32 so that by God's will I may come to
you with joy and (E) be refreshed in your company.

Phil 6 – Pray to God about Everything

6(A) do not be anxious about anything,(B) but in everything by prayer and supplication(C) with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

When we pray, we confess our faith that God knows us and that He loves us. He is our heavenly Father, and because Jesus, His Son, traded places with us, we are God's children, and God hears our prayers as if Jesus Himself were praying them and Romans 8 reassures us that the Holy Spirit prays right along with us. So our prayers are not just individual prayers, but **all believers in Christ pray with us along with Jesus and the Holy Spirit.**

Rom 8 – The Holy Spirit Interceded for Us

26Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For(AU) we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but(AV) the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27And(AW) he who searches hearts knows what is(AX) the mind of the Spirit, because[f] the Spirit(AY) intercedes for the saints(AZ) according to the will of God.

[The next several paragraphs are based on:
http://www.lcmspastor.com/files/3-08%20Liturgy8.doc]

The Prayer typically follows an order of **petition, intercession, and thanksgiving**. We bring our requests to God (petition), we pray for others (intercession), and we thank God for His love (thanksgiving).

Phil 6 – Make Your Petitions, Intercessions, and Thanksgiving Known to God

6(A) do not be anxious about anything,(B) but in everything by prayer and supplication(C) with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

The prayer can follow various forms. One common and ancient form is the **"Bidding Prayer,"** which begins, "Let us pray for…," followed by the actual prayer, and the congregation responds, "Amen," expressing their faith that God hears the prayer and will answer it.

A variation on the Bidding Prayer follows this form: "For…let us pray to the Lord." The congregation responds with the simple prayer that summarizes our need for God to hear us and our unworthiness to be heard: **"Lord, have mercy."**

Another common form uses a string of collects (like the previously described Collect of the Day), each ending with, "Lord, in Your mercy," to which the congregation responds in faith, **"Hear our prayer,"** knowing God does hear our prayer.

Whatever form the prayer takes, **it expresses the sure and certain knowledge of God's love and mercy**. We know God will hear our prayers and provide, not because we ask, but because He loved us before we asked.

Conclusion of the Service of the Word

In this setting of the Divine Service, the Prayer of the Church concludes the Service of the Word. In other settings the Offertory concludes this portion of the Divine Service. Either way provides **a transition from the Word to the Sacrament**. Through the Word the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens faith. Faith causes us to offer ourselves and all we have to God (Offertory and Offering) and intercede for others (Prayers). Faith also causes us to look forward to the Sacrament to receive the very body and blood of Christ.

8. The Service of Holy Communion

The Preface

We now begin the second major portion of the Divine Service, the Service of the Sacrament or the Service of Holy Communion. The high point of this part of the Service is the Lord's Supper. When Jesus hosted the Last Supper, before he gave out the bread and wine, he gave thanks. And so before we eat and drink the Lord's Supper, we do the same. **The Preface and Proper Preface are a time of giving thanks before the Lord's Supper.** Eucharist is a Greek word which means thanksgiving. So another name for the Lord's Supper is Eucharist or The Great Thanksgiving. Because we are so thankful for Christ giving himself for us and for our salvation, and because we so look forward to receiving Christ's body and blood, we break forth with thanksgiving and praise to our Savior.

The words of the Preface are as follows:

> The Lord be with you.
> And with your spirit.
>
> Lift up your hearts!
> We lift them up unto the Lord!
>
> Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
> It is meet and right so to do.
>
> It is indeed meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord
>
> [the appointed proper preface is read or chanted here]
>
> Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

The Preface begins with the common greeting between Christians: The pastors says, "The Lord be with you." And the congregation responds, "And with thy spirit." This is called the Salutation. (For more information on it, see the Salutation in the Service of the Word.) This greeting alerts us that something important is about to happen. And **it focuses us on where God is for us and on how God comes to us (earlier in the Word and now in the Sacrament).** It is very appropriate that this greeting appears at this point in the Service, because when the pastor says, "The Lord be with you", **we know that Jesus is with us in the bread and wine of the Lord's**

Supper. In the Supper Christ is the Host and he is the Meal. Therefore he is most definitely with us.

The Preface then continues with the pastor saying, “Lift up your hearts!” and the congregation’s response of “We lift them up unto the Lord!” These sentences are a recognition that all of our hearts are broken because we are all sinners. And we know we can do nothing to fix them. So the pastor urges us, in faith, to lift our hearts up and give them to the Lord that he may heal them and make them new so that we can receive his gifts. **The congregation’s response is one of faith, entrusting ourselves completely to the Lord.**

Our thoughts, words, and deeds are controlled by our “heart”. So before we can think, say, and do acts of worship, our hearts must be receptive to God and his gifts. **Only the Lord can give us receptive hearts.** Only then can we receive his gifts and respond with true acts of worship.

Lam 3 – Lift up our hearts to God that he may make them repent hearts

40 Let us test and examine our ways,
(BC) and return to the LORD!
41 (BD) Let us lift up our hearts and hands
to God in heaven:
42 (BE) "We have transgressed and (BF) rebelled,
and you have not forgiven.

Luke 21 – Look to God for your redemption

28 When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Ps 86 – Lift up your soul to the Lord for he is loving and forgiving

4 Gladden the soul of your servant,
for (G) to you, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
5 For you, O Lord, are good and (H) forgiving,
(I) abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.

Our whole lives should be lives of thanksgiving (Heb 13:15; Col 3:17). This moment in the Service shows us how we should live. In the garden, Adam and Eve took what did not belong to them and therefore could not say thanks. Because of this all people, like Adam and Eve, are takers and not receivers. The Lord gives generously but we don’t say thank you. A relationship with God, as God intended it to be, is one where God gives and we receive and then we respond by saying thank you. In our Baptism we were brought back to Eden, back to a relationship with God, back to being thankful receivers of God’s good gifts. In this new relationship we know our gracious God and what he is about to freely give us in his Supper, so **we can’t help but give thanks for such wonderful gifts**.

We should indeed always give thanks to God. But since the Lord gives us so much, what should we thank him for? If we thanked him for everything he gives us, we would never stop giving thanks. So **the church has divided up and focused our thanksgiving by using the church year as it guide.** This part of the Preface is called the Proper Preface, for the thanksgiving we offer is what is proper for this

season of the church year. During every season all of our thanksgiving centers in Jesus, our Savior. During Advent, our thanksgiving focuses on our waiting for the coming of Jesus, in the past, present, and future. During Christmas, we focus on Jesus' incarnation, God becoming flesh to live among us. In Epiphany we thank God that he has made the Savior and the salvation he won known to us. In Lent we are thankful that God prepares our hearts to receive our Savior. During Easter we thank Jesus for his death and resurrection for us, which won victory over all of our enemies. Pentecost is a time when we thank God the Holy Spirit for giving faith and spreading the Good News of the salvation Jesus won. During the non-festival half of the church year, we thank God for the life, preaching, teaching, and healing ministry of Jesus in our lives.

1 Cor 11 – Jesus gave thanks before eating and drinking the Lord's Supper

23 For(A) I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you,
that(B) the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took
bread, 24 and *when he had given thanks*, he broke it, and said,
"This is my body which is for[a] you. Do this in remembrance of
me."[b] 25 *In the same way also* he took the cup, after supper,
saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as
often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Heb 13 – Through Christ we continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God.

15(A) Through him then *let us continually offer up(B) a sacrifice of praise* to God, that is,(C) the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

Col 3 – Do everything in Jesus' name giving thanks to God the Father

17 And(A) whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,(B) *giving thanks to God the Father through him*.

Is 51 – The LORD turns our wilderness into Eden, a place of joy, gladness, and thanksgiving.

3 For the LORD(A) comforts Zion;
he comforts all her waste places
and makes her wilderness like(B) Eden,
her desert like(C) the garden of the LORD;
(D) joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.

Ps 34 – Our hearts are broken and our sprits crushed, but the LORD is near to save.

18 The LORD is near to(A) the brokenhearted
and saves(B) the crushed in spirit.

The end of the Preface has the following transition into a song of praise: “Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:”. In the song of praise that we are about to sing, **we join with the angels and the Church Triumphant** (believers already gone to heaven) **in praising God**. We, being so thankful for God’s grace, gladly join in with the angels. We do here what Heb. 12 says; we join the innumerable angels in a great festival, celebrating our Savior.

Heb. 12 – Christians join the angels in the heavenly festival.

22 But you have come to(AI) Mount Zion and to the city of the living
God,(AJ) the heavenly Jerusalem, and to(AK) innumerable angels in
festal gathering,

The Sanctus

The thanksgiving of the Preface leads us directly into the praise of the Sanctus. **In the Sanctus we join the angels in their never-ending song of praise.** The first half of the Sanctus comes from Isaiah 6:3. In Isaiah’s vision of heaven, he is given a glimpse of God on his throne with the angels praising God saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;(E) the whole earth is full of his glory!" Isaiah, knowing that he was a sinner and that no sinner can look at holy God and live, believes he is lost. **In the Divine Service we too are sinful and, like Isaiah, are in the very presence of holy God.** Are we doomed? No! God himself provides the solution to our predicament. The solution is provided in the second half of the Sanctus. God the Father sends his Son in his name to save us. The second half of the Sanctus comes from Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (Mt 21:1-11). As Jesus entered Jerusalem for his suffering and death, the crowds welcomed him by shouting, “Hosanna!” (which means save us, now). In fulfillment to the shouts of the crowds, Jesus now comes to us in the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper and as we stand in God’s holy presence, we cry out “Hosanna!” **In the Supper Jesus comes to save us now**. Because of the crucified and risen body and blood of Christ, which is received in the Lord’s Supper, **our sins and guilt are taken away.** Therefore when God sees us, he sees us not as sinful but as holy.

Is 6 – Isaiah sees and hears the angels praising God

1 In the year that(A) King Uzziah died I(B) saw the Lord sitting upon
a throne, high and lifted up; and the train[a] of his robe filled the
temple. 2 Above him stood the seraphim. Each had(C) six wings:
with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet,
and with two he flew. 3 And one called to another and said:

(D) "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;(E) the whole earth is
full of his glory!"[b]

4 And(F) the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of
him who called, and(G) the house was filled with smoke. 5 And I
said: "Woe is me!(H) For I am lost;(I) for I am a man of unclean
lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my
eyes have seen the(J) King, the LORD of hosts!"

Mt 21 – Jesus comes to save.

9 And the crowds that went before him and that followed him
were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

Rev 4 – The angels never cease to praise God.

8 And the four living creatures,(R) each of them with six wings,
are(S) full of eyes all around and within, and(T) day and night they
never cease to say,

(U) "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
(V) who was and is and is to come!"

Mt 21 – The people shout Hosanna to the Son of David.

9 And the crowds that went before him and that followed him
were shouting,(A) "Hosanna to(B) the Son of David!(C) Blessed is he
who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna(D) in the highest!"

Ps 118 – Jesus comes in name of the LORD to save us

25 Save us, we pray, O LORD!
O LORD, we pray, give us success!
26(AE) Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!
We(AF) bless you from the house of the LORD.

The combination of the holy, holy, holy and the words that the crowds greeted Jesus with on Palm Sunday serves as **a confession that this Jesus, who now comes to us to save us in, with and under the bread and wine, is the Triune God who Isaiah saw in the heavenly throne room.** As the angels praised God singing, "Holy, holy, holy!," we sing "Holy, holy, holy" to Jesus because **he is God**. As the people welcomed Jesus shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!," so we do the same in the Sanctus recognizing that **Jesus now comes to us in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper to save us.**

The Pre-Communion Prayer or The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

We, who are gathered together, who are about to eat the Meal provided by God, are the family of God. He has made us his sons and daughters in Holy Baptism. So before the family of God eats this holy Meal provided by the Father, it **prays a table prayer**, as it does for every meal, **recognizing that God provides it in grace**. The table prayer that we use for this special meal is the Lord's Prayer.

The family of God prays the prayer that Jesus, our Brother, has taught us to pray. The Lord's Prayer serves very well as a table prayer for the Lord's Supper. This prayer is

addressed to our heavenly Father who provides us with this life-giving Meal. We pray that God's name would be hallowed **in this meal**. We pray that God's kingdom would come to us in this meal as we receive Jesus' own body and blood. We pray that God's will will be done in this meal. We pray that we would receive daily bread, which is the Bread of Life, Jesus himself, in the Supper. We pray for the forgiveness of our sins. The Lord's Supper is the clear answer to this petition of forgiveness, as we receive the body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins. We pray for deliverance from evil and the evil one. This meal provides the deliverance Jesus won for us on the cross. **All of the requests made in the Lord's Prayer are immediately answered with a resounding "Yes!" in the Lord's Supper.**

Jesus is the one who unites sinners with God the Father. He bridges the gap that sin has caused. He did this by becoming man and giving his body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Only in Christ can we approach God and receive the gifts he gives. In Baptism we are made the Father's children when we are united with Christ (Ro. 6). In the Lord's Supper the Father feeds his children the Bread of Life, who is Christ. In the Lord's Prayer we speak to our Father by using the prayer our Brother Jesus has taught us. **In all things it is Christ who connects us with the Father.**

Matt. 6 – Jesus Teaches How to Pray

9(A) Pray then like this:

(B) "Our Father in heaven,(C) hallowed be(D) your name.[a] 10(E) Your kingdom come,(F) your will be done,[b]
(G) on earth as it is in heaven.
11(H) Give us(I) this day our daily bread,[c] 12and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13And(J) lead us not into temptation,
but(K) deliver us from(L) evil.[d]

Gal 1 – The End of Paul's Greeting to the Galatians.

5to whom be *the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Heb 13 – The End of Paul's Benediction of the Hebrews.

21(AN) equip you with everything good that you may do his will,(AO) working in us[a] that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ,(AP) to whom be *glory forever and ever. Amen*.

Rev 1 – Part of John's Greeting to the Seven Churches

To(P) him who loves us and(Q) has freed us from our sins by his blood 6and made us(R) a kingdom,(S) priests to(T) his God and Father, to him be(U) *glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

1 Chr 29 – Part of David's Prayer as He Turned Power Over to Solomon

11(AT) Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. 12(AU) Both riches and honor come

from you, and you rule over all.(AV) In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

The Pre-Communion Prayer

[This section is based on: http://steadfastlutherans2.org/?p=5042.]
In some settings we may use a different prayer than the Lord's Prayer. The prayer before Communion (LSB pp. 161/178 and 209) is part of the preparation for Communion. It is also called the Eucharistic Prayer because it continues the spirit of thanksgiving that started with the Preface. **In the prayer, we give thanks to the Lord for the redemption which He has secured for us by His cross; we ask Him to prepare us to receive that redemption in living and joyful faith.** The prayer also points us away from ourselves and places the emphasis on God who is the host at the Lord's Supper.

The Pre-Communion Prayer also teaches us. Read the words carefully for yourself. It teaches us that God has had mercy on us in Christ. It teaches us that we can't save ourselves but that we have redemption in Jesus. It teaches us that God Himself has gathered us and all Christians from the ends of the earth to this meal, which is the unending marriage feast of the Lamb (p. 161/178). It teaches us that, though we were barred from the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, God has planted a new tree at Calvary; in the Lord's Supper, we take and eat the fruits of the tree of life and live forever (p. 209).

The Prayer of Thanksgiving is fairly new for Lutherans and is not included in all Divine Service settings. In some other churches this prayer is combined with the words of Institution. Lutherans view this as dangerous because it mingles our words of prayer with our Lord's words which consecrate the bread and wine. But as long as they are clearly kept separate, **the Eucharistic Prayer follows our Lord's example of giving thanks before the sacred meal.**

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and remembrance of Jesus, we beg you, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us to do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful in the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To

> You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

The Words of Institution

The words of Institution are Jesus' words that he spoke at the Last Supper with his disciples. The words he spoke then are **the words he speaks at the Lord's Supper that we eat.** Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying:

> "Take, eat. This is my + body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me."

Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples saying:

> "Drink of it, all of you. This cup is the new testament in my + blood, which is shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins. This do as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Since Jesus is God, his word is powerful. When God created the world, he spoke it into existence. **His word creates what it says**. It does the same in the Lord's Supper. The bread becomes Jesus' body and the wine becomes Jesus' blood because Jesus says so. At the same time the bread is still bread and the wine is still wine. **Jesus' body and blood are really present, but they are in, with, and under the disguise of bread and wine.** So when we eat, we eat bread and Christ's body. And when we drink, we drink wine and Jesus' blood.

The body and blood that we eat and drink are Jesus' crucified and risen body and blood. When Jesus ascended into heaven, he told his disciples, "I will be with you always, even to the very end of the age." **How is he with us? He is with us in his Word and Sacraments**, the Scriptures, Baptism and the Supper. How can Jesus be physically present with us in this way? This is not something that we can understand; it's a mystery. We can only believe it by faith because Jesus has said it. **We take Jesus at his word and we trust his word.**

Some translate Jesus words as "new covenant" and others translate them as "new testament". Which is correct? Technically, neither is wrong. The same word can and is translated as "covenant" or "testament." In Hebrew 9, which talks about the Divine Service, it makes sense to translate it as testament, as it speaks of inheritance after death (Heb 9:15-20). A last will and testament only takes effect after a person dies (Heb 9:17). **Lutherans then view the words of institution as Christ's last will and testament. It is a reading of Jesus' will and in it he bequeaths to his family his body and blood for the forgiveness of their sins.** He willingly gave up his life that we might have life.

Another reason Lutherans view it as a last will and testament instead of a covenant is the context of the Last Supper. The Last Supper was held "on the night that he was betrayed." Jesus knew what lay ahead of him; he knew he was being betrayed unto his death. **One of his last official acts before his death was to pass down to his "family" his "possessions."** Jesus had no earthly possessions, but he had

something of far greater value. Everyone in his family was to receive his body and blood for the forgiveness of their sins. The reading of his last will and testament was a one-time event, but that event is an on-going event; the Lord's Supper is a never-ending feast. **Every Sunday Jesus, through the pastor, reads his will and gives out to his family the gifts that he bequeaths to them - life, peace, and forgiveness.**

One last word about a will and testament. **A testament is dependent upon the testator dying before it takes effect**, which Jesus was about to do as he ate his last meal with his disciples. **A covenant** on the other hand **is dependent on both parties to the covenant living.** So it makes more sense to view this as a testament rather than a covenant because Jesus died and when he did his last will and testament took affect.

How often should the Lord's Supper be celebrated? Jesus' command was "Do this often in remembrance of me." In the early church they had Holy Communion every Sunday. Earlier in my lifetime many Lutheran churches only had Communion once a month. Then some had it twice a month. While there is no specific command of how many times to have Communion per month, having it once or twice a month doesn't seem very "often" as Jesus commanded. **And if Holy Communion is what we believe it is, the reception of the very body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins, then wouldn't we want to receive it every Sunday, at every Divine Service?** Part of the reason Lutheran churches didn't have Communion every Sunday was because Catholic churches had it every Sunday and we didn't want to be like them. But if we let the Scriptures be our guide then we want to receive the Sacrament as often as possible because **we need Christ and we need the forgiveness of sins he offers.** In the Sacrament our souls are nourished. In everyday life, we don't eat just one meal a day; we nourish our bodies more often to keep them energized and healthy. The same should be true with our souls. Our faith needs to be nourished often – every Sunday.

Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglicans (among others) believe that the Lord's Supper is an unbloody sacrifice, that Jesus is being sacrificed again, that he is *our sacrifice* to the Father. **Lutherans reject this because Hebrews says that Jesus was sacrificed on Calvary "once and for all."** Their view has things backwards. Instead of God giving us the body and blood of Christ and we receiving it and eating and drinking it as Jesus commanded ("Take, eat; this is my body," "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood…"), they turn it into our gift to the Father. We simply take Jesus at his word and try and follow his command as closely as possible.

Matt 26 – The Lord's Supper

26(A) Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and(B) after
blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take,
eat;(C) this is my body." 27And he took a cup, and when he(D) had
given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you,
28for(E) this is my(F) blood of the[a] covenant, which is poured out
for(G) many(H) for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 14 – The Lord's Supper

22(A) And as they were eating, he took bread, and after(B) blessing
it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take;(C) this is my
body." 23And he took a cup, and when he had(D) given thanks he

gave it to them, and they all drank of it. 24And he said to them, (E) "This is my(F) blood of the[a] covenant, which is poured out for(G) many. 25Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Luke 22 – The Lord's Supper

19(C) And he took bread, and(D) when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, (E) "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, (F) "This cup that is poured out for you is(G) the new(H) covenant in my blood.[a]

1 Cor 11 – The Lord's Supper

23For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

The Peace

[This paragraph comes from: http://steadfastlutherans2.org/?p=5193 .]

After the words of institution, the pastor gives the Peace, "The peace of the Lord be with you always." Some pastors may have the custom of raising the elements (bread and wine) up into the air while saying this **to clearly show that our peace with God comes through Christ's work and Christ's Meal.** The people of God respond with the simple confession, "And also with you" – saying that this meal does indeed bring this promised peace to everyone who receives it in faith.

The word "peace" is the translation of the Hebrew word "shalom." This kind of peace refers to much more than a cessation of violence or anger between two parties. This peace speaks of the well-being, wholeness, and complete health of the whole person, body and soul. The effects of sin are total. Sin affects our whole being. In the Garden of Eden, where sin was first introduced to the human race, sin ruined the relationship between God and the people he created. It ruined the relationship between the man and the woman. It ruined the relationship between people and their daily life, their work. Sin made life hard and toilsome. And to make matters even worse, man could do nothing about it. He would be stuck this way forever unless God did something about it. And thankfully, he did! **He sent his only Son to reverse the effects of sin, to make us healthy and whole again in body and soul.** He did this through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Those who receive the Sacrament receive the benefit of Jesus' work. They receive "the peace that surpasses all understanding."

Paul begins each of his letters by saying, “Grace and peace to you.” “Grace and peace” are the results of Jesus’ work. **In the Sacrament we are about to receive the grace (free, undeserved gift) of the forgiveness of sins and the peace of a clear conscience.** We talk much about the forgiveness we receive in Christ. But another great gift that Christ gives us is the **release from our guilt**. Because we are sinful, we are guilty before God and our conscience tells us so. But because of what Jesus did for us, we are no longer guilty in God’s sight and we therefore should no longer feel guilty. Christ gives us the peace of a guilt-free conscience.

After his resurrection when Jesus appeared to his frightened and worried disciples he said to them, “Peace be with you.” Here at this point in the Divine Service Jesus speaks the same thing to us. In these words Jesus invites us to believe that in this Sacrament he does indeed offer us his peace. We need not be anxious or worried. In faith we believe and look forward to receiving this peace in the reception of his crucified and risen body and blood. Faith grabs a hold of God’s promises and will not let go. In faith we hold on to this promise from God of peace. **We need not be afraid for our risen Savior is with us, gives us himself, and gives us his peace.**

The peace that Christ offers in the Sacrament is a complete peace. **This includes peace with our brothers and sisters in Christ.** Jesus urged reconciliation before worship (Mt 5:23-24). The barrier between individuals is also a barrier before God. The Sacrament is all about unity. **We are unified with God, with each other, and with the whole Christian church.** Divisions in the church are a contradiction of our faith. For in faith we are all united in Christ. If there are divisions then we do not have true and complete peace.

Notice how the peace theme runs through this and coming parts of the service. Here the pastor says, “The peace of the Lord be with you always.” Next, the Anges Dei ends with “grant us peace.” Then we receive the peace of Christ when we partake in the Supper. In the Nunc Dimittus, we, like Simeon, are ready to “depart in peace” because we have seen and held the Christ in the Sacrament. And finally, we end the Service with the Aaronic Benediction, where the last thing the pastor says is “and give you peace.” **Our entire being is made whole in Christ; we have true peace only in him.**

John 20 – The Risen Lord Appears to His Disciples

19 (A) On the evening (B) of that day, the first day of the week, (C) the
doors being locked where the disciples were (D) for fear of the
Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, (E)
"Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, (F) he showed them
his hands and his side. Then (G) the disciples were glad when they
saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you.
As (H) the Father has sent me, (I) even so I am sending you."

John 20 – Jesus Appears to His Disciples Again

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas
was with them. (A) Although the doors were locked, Jesus came
and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

Luke 24 – Jesus Appears to Two Disciples Traveling to Emmaus

[36]As they were talking about these things,[A] Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"

John 16 – Peace is Found in Jesus

[33]I have said these things to you, that[A] in me you may have peace.[B] In the world you will have[C] tribulation. But[D] take heart; [E] I have overcome the world."

Phil 4 – The Peace of God Guards Us

[7]And[A] the peace of God,[B] which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Acts 10 – Peace Through Jesus

[36]As for[C] the word that he sent to Israel,[D] preaching good news of[E] peace through Jesus Christ ([F] he is Lord of all),

Rom 5 – Peace with God Through Faith

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mt 5 – Jesus says be reconciled before worship

[23][A] So if[B] you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, [24]leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Eph 2 – Jesus is our peace

[13]But now in Christ Jesus you who once were[A] far off have been brought near[B] by the blood of Christ. [14]For[C] he himself is our peace,

The Agnus Dei (or Lamb of God)

Angus Dei is Latin. In English it means “Lamb of God.” We sing this song immediately prior to receiving Holy Communion. The text of the Angus Dei is as follows:

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.
Amen.

As we are about to receive the holy Sacrament, we focus on what is most important, on Christ himself and all that he has done for us. **And what he has done for us is willingly give himself as a sacrifice.** In the OT the picture of a sacrifice that

comes to mind is the picture of a lamb being sacrificed. The sacrifice of Abel was a lamb. The sacrifice of each Israelite family was a lamb without defect at the Passover. Lambs were sacrificed at the tabernacle and later also at the temple. In each case the lamb gave up its life in place of the people who offered it. This is called substitutionary sacrifice, where the lamb took the place of the sinner, taking the punishment he deserved for his sin. In the case of the sacrifices at the tabernacle and temple, the blood of the lamb was used to make atonement (at-one, bring back together). The shed blood of the lamb brought the sinner back together with to be at one with God.

So the image of Jesus as the Lamb of God is most appropriate. Jesus, our prefect Passover Lamb (1 Cor 5:7), was our substitute, dying the death that we deserved. And Jesus' blood made atonement for us; through it we are made one again with God. And so now **we focus on Christ, the Lamb of God, our substitute and atoning sacrifice.**

[The next paragraph is based on the description of the Agnus Dei in: http://www.osl.cc/believe/unit12.html .]

As we have seen, for centuries the blood of lambs sacrificed on Hebrew altars pointed forward to the Messiah, the One great sacrifice of the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". As John the Baptist greeted our Lord with this title (John 1:29), he was identifying Jesus as the long awaited Messiah. **When we sing this song, we too recognize Jesus as the Messiah, as our Messiah.**

In singing the Lamb of God, we do the same as John the Baptist. When John saw Jesus, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" We too now see Jesus in the bread (body) broken and the wine (blood) poured out. And **we too recognize him as the Lamb of God** who takes away the sins of the world, which includes our sins and the sins of those gathered with us. When we sing this song, **we confess that Jesus is present and that he was the one-time sacrifice provided by God to take away the sins of the whole world**. We sing it three times to give emphasis to the fact of who Jesus really is and what he has done.

The first two lines end with us asking Jesus to "have mercy on us." This might remind us of the Kyrie (Lord Have Mercy) from the beginning of the Service of the Word. In the Kyrie we see ourselves as we really are – beggars. We come before Jesus with nothing to offer, completely dependent upon him. Now as we come to Jesus at his Supper, **we come as beggars once again. We have nothing to offer; we come at his invitation; we come with empty hands outstretched (faith) ready to receive the free gifts of life, health, and salvation that he offers.**

In the last line of the Lamb of God, we ask to Jesus to "grant us peace." This too looks forward to the reception of the bread/body and wine/blood. **When we receive Jesus' body and blood, we receive the gift of peace,** the gift of wholeness and complete well-being. We have spoken of peace several times as we approach Holy Communion. We are now at the threshold of receiving that peace.

The song ends with **"Amen,"** which means **"this is true!"** It is so true that Jesus is the Lamb of God. It is so true that Jesus takes away the sins of the world. It is so true that Jesus has mercy on us. It is so true that Jesus grants us peace. In the Sacrament the sacrificed body and blood of the Lamb of God takes away our sins, providing us

with forgiveness, mercy, and peace**. In singing The Lamb of God, we publically acknowledge this and look forward to it.**

John 1 – Jesus, the Lamb of God

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,
"Behold,[A] the Lamb of God, who[B] takes away the sin[C] of the
world!

Is 53 – Jesus, A Lamb Led to the Slaughter

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
[A] yet he opened not his mouth;
[B] like a[C] lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.

1 Cor 5 – Christ, Our Passover Lamb

7 Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you
really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been
sacrificed.

1 Pet 1 – Christ, a Lamb Without Blemish

18 knowing that you[A] were ransomed from[B] the futile ways
inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such
as silver or gold, 19 but[C] with the precious blood of Christ, like
that of[D] a lamb[E] without blemish or spot.

Rev. 5 – The Lamb who was slain receives worship

11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living
creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering[A]
myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a
loud voice,[B] "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive
power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory
and blessing!" 13 And I heard[C] every creature in heaven and on
earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them,
saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be
blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" 14 And
the four living creatures[D] said, "Amen!" and the elders[E] fell
down and worshiped.

The Communion Distribution

Jesus won forgiveness of sins for the world through his death on the cross. Having won this forgiveness, how will he then deliver this gift of forgiveness to people? God

has chosen very simple and mundane ways to deliver this precious gift. **He delivers it through his Word**, his Word that is proclaimed, his Word connected to the water of Baptism, and his Word connected to the Bread and Wine of the Lord's Supper. **In the Lord's Supper Jesus, who is the Word, comes personally and delivers the gifts he won, forgiveness, life, salvation, and peace.**

Some churches teach that Communion is only symbolic, that Christ is not present bodily. Others teach that our spirits are taken to Christ in heaven or to the foot of the cross. Some teach that we are reoffering Christ as a sacrifice to the Father. But in contrast to all of these views, we, as Lutheran Christians, teach that Christ comes to us. We believe that we are in God's house at his table where he has invited us to this sacred meal that he provides and in which he is the host. It is he who provides the meal, and in fact, he is the meal. And the purpose of this meal is for the forgiveness of our sins (Mt 26:28). **For us, the entire focus of Holy Communion is on God and what he is doing in Christ for us.** We are only receiving from his gracious hand. We believe that Communion is more than symbolic; **we believe Jesus' words that we are receiving his very body ("This is my body") and blood ("This is my blood") which was given and shed "for you" (Mt 26:26-28).** We believe that it is not us who go to God, but God who comes down to us and is serving us (Mt 20:27). As Christ came to this world as a child, as God in the flesh, so **he now comes to us in the flesh in this meal, serving us and feeding us with himself.**

In one of Jesus' parables, a guest at a wedding banquet is found who is not wearing the required wedding garment. Immediately he is thrown out of the banquet (Matt. 22:1-14). This incident presents us with a dress code for how we are to present ourselves at the Lord's Supper. It's not a prescription for the type of physical clothing to wear. Rather, we come to this holy meal as guests of the Bridegroom, clothed in His royal righteousness. This clothing is required at the Supper. Through faith we stand before Him, able to take part in the sumptuous feast and receive the wondrous gifts He lavishes on us. **It is faith that provides this clothing for us and it is faith that enables us to receive the gifts that he offers in his Supper. Without faith the gifts he offers cannot be received.**

In Holy Communion we go as invited guests to the Lord's Table. In most Lutheran churches the communicants kneel at the communion rail as we come humbly before our holy God. The pastor gives each person the bread/body of Christ to eat saying, "Take, eat. This is body of Christ given for you." And then he gives us wine/blood of Christ to drink, saying "Take and drink. This is the blood of Christ given for you for the forgiveness of sin." **When we receive the bread and wine, we hear that they are given "for you" and "for the forgiveness of sin."** There is great assurance knowing that Christ personally gave himself "for you," for the forgiveness of your sins. And even as God spoke his word and the sermon through the pastor, so here he serves us himself through the pastor. The great communion hymn states it this way when speaking of Jesus: **"Himself the victim and Himself the Priest;" as our Priest, he serves the meal and as the Victim, he is the meal.**

The dismissal from the Lord's Supper reminds us of exactly what has been received and the benefits of this sacrament. In dismissing the communicants, the pastor will say,

> "The true body and Blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you steadfast in the one true faith unto life everlasting. Depart in peace."

We have received more than mere bread and wine. We have received the very body and blood of Christ. The body and blood received here are a reminder and a sure evidence for our faith that Jesus did indeed give his body into death for us. And he did it to **preserve and strengthen our faith and to give us eternal life.** It also reminds us that our **faith in Christ is the only true faith**. And through this faith God gives eternal life. Trust placed in anyone or anything other than Christ is a false faith that leads to destruction. **Knowing what we have received and who we received it from, we can go in peace, sure of our forgiveness.**

Matt 26 – The Lord's Supper

26(A) Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and(B) after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat;(C) this is my body." 27And he took a cup, and when he(D) had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, 28for(E) this is my(F) blood of the[a] covenant, which is poured out for(G) many(H) for the forgiveness of sins.

Mt 20 – Jesus Came to Serve

26(A) It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,[a] 27and whoever would be first among you must be your slave,[b] 28even as the Son of Man came not to be served but(B) to serve, and(C) to give his life as a ransom for(D) many."

The Post-Communion Canticle

The Nunc Dimittis

In Luke 2:25ff, we read **the account of a godly and presumably old man named Simeon**. The Holy Spirit had promised Simeon that he would live to see the long promised Christ (Messiah, Savior). He fulfilled His promise when Mary and Joseph went to the Temple in Jerusalem to present Jesus before the Lord. Simeon picked up infant Jesus and, holding Him in his arms, he spoke by the guiding of the Holy Spirit, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy Word, For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people. A Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel."

From this text we derive the Post-Communion Collect called the Nunc Dimittis (meaning "now dismiss" or "now let [us] depart"). Simeon had seen all he needed to see and he could now die in peace. **He had held and seen the Savior, who was God in the flesh; he had seen the God-man Jesus who had come to bring salvation to Israel and to the world.** God had kept his promise; salvation had arrived.

The words sung in the Nunc Dimmittus:

> Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy Word,

For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people.
A Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

What wonderful words to apply to the end of Communion. The singing of the Nunc Dimmittus by the congregation after Communion is done only by Lutherans (as best I know). But as one thinks about, it seems very appropriate. Like Simeon, who had been led by the Holy Spirit to hold the holy Child and revealed by the Spirit that this was the long awaited Savior, so **we too are led by he Spirit to receive the holy Christ as we receive the bread and wine. And also the Holy Spirit reveals to us that in receiving Christ we are receiving our Savior and our salvation.** Thankfully this Savior was not only Israel's Savior, but also the Savior of the Gentiles (non-Jews, which includes most of us) too. Having received the Christ and his salvation in the Sacrament, we depart from the Lord's Table and His house and go back into the world in peace. He makes us whole and healthy again. We have all we need in Christ.

Luke 2 – Simeon Held the Christ Child, Our Salvation

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon,
and this man was(AO) righteous and(AP) devout,(AQ) waiting for(AR) the
consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it
had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not(AS)
see death before he had seen(AT) the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came
in the Spirit into the temple, and when(AU) the parents brought in
the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the
Law, 28 he took him up in his arms and(AV) blessed God and said,
29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant[d] depart(AW) in peace,
(AX) according to your word;
30 for(AY) my eyes have seen your(AZ) salvation
31 (BA) that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
32 (BB) a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and(BC) for glory to(BD) your people Israel."

33 And(BE) his father and his mother marveled at what was said
about him. 34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his
mother, "Behold, this child is appointed(BF) for the fall and rising of
many in Israel, and for a sign(BG) that is opposed 35 (and a sword
will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from
many hearts may be revealed."

Thank the Lord

Another Canticle that can be sung is “Thank the Lord.” It is based on Psalm 105 and it reflects the natural **response of thanksgiving after receiving the wonderful gift of God’s forgiving grace in Christ.** When it is used, it forms bookends of thanksgiving for the Sacrament with the Preface. In the Preface we begin with thanksgiving as we look forward to receiving the gifts of forgiveness, peace, and life. And after we have received them in the body and blood of Christ, we give thanks to God for these gracious gifts.

The words of “Thank the Lord”:

> Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell everyone what he has done. Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and proudly bear His name. He recalls His promises and leads His people forth in joy with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia, alleluia.

Ps. 105 summarizes the mighty deeds God did for Israel. It recounts God’s covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It recounts God’s selection and protection of these few wandering people as his “anointed ones”. It recounts God’s use of a famine and Joseph in preparation to create the nation of Israel. It recounts how God made Israel “fruitful,” to grow great in number in Egypt. It recalls how God raised up Moses to perform the ten plagues in Egypt. It recalls how God brought Israel out of Egypt. It recounts how God provided for Israel in the desert with shade, light, meat, bread, and water, while bringing his people to the land God promised to Abraham. And finally it recalls the people’s joy as God gave them possession of the Promised Land. For all of this the psalmist says that Israel should **give thanks and praise to the LORD**. For all of this Israel should **tell others of God’s mighty deeds and rejoice.**

Now, in this song, we apply this psalm to ourselves. God has promised us the eternal promised land of heaven. God has selected us as his children and protects and provides for us as we wander through the wilderness of this life. God has raised up a Deliverer who provides the miracles that release us from our bondage of sin. In the plagues God attached his Word to earthly elements to rescue and release his people from slavery. In Baptism and the Lord’s Supper God attaches his Word to water, bread, and wine. Through them we are connected to Jesus’ death and resurrection and are released from the sin that enslaves us. As we journey toward our promised land, in Christ God provides us with the strength we need to make the journey. He does it with the body and blood of his Son. By consuming it, we are “strengthened and preserved steadfast in the one true faith to life everlasting.” **So we too the new Israel, like Israel of old, should thank and praise Him and tell everyone what he has done for us. We too should rejoice that God keeps his baptismal promises to us to lead us to our heavenly home.** And so in this canticle, we do!

> **Ps 105 – Give Thanks to the LORD for His Wonderful Works**
> 1 (A) Oh give thanks to the LORD; (B) call upon his name;
> (C) make known his deeds among the peoples!
> 2 Sing to him, sing praises to him;
> (D) tell of all his wondrous works!
> 3 Glory in his holy name;
> let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice!
> 4 Seek the LORD and his (E) strength;
> (F) seek his presence continually!

5 Remember the[G] wondrous works that he has done,
his miracles, and[H] the judgments he uttered,
6 O offspring of[I] Abraham, his servant,
children of Jacob, his[J] chosen ones!

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

In some settings, before the Prayer of Thanksgiving, the pastor encourages the congregation to give thanks by using the first part of Ps.107:1: "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good." The congregation responds with last part of the verse: "and his mercy endures forever." By responding this way to the pastor's invitation to give thanks, the congregation acknowledges that **we should give thanks because God is a merciful God, not giving us what we deserve. But instead he gives us his Son and forgiveness of our sins.** In the Meal that we have just received, God has indeed given us his Son and the forgiveness that he won. For this then we join in the prayer of thanksgiving.

Ps 107 – Give Thanks to the LORD

1[A] Oh give thanks to the LORD,[B] for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever!

The Post-Communion liturgy does not linger long. It is brief so as not to detract from the high point that was reached in Communion itself (L. Reed). The Communion liturgy promptly ends with the Post-Communion Collect or Prayer of Thanksgiving. With the Collect **we end the way we started the Communion liturgy with a note of thanks for the gifts we beneficially received by faith.** Read the Post-Communion Collects in your hymnal (or see below). (LSB p. 166 – the first two collects are found in all five Divine Service settings, the final collect is also given for DS 1, 2, and 4.) Ask yourself what these Collects teach you about Communion and about its implications for the fellowship of believers.

Three of the post-Communion prayers are as follows:

(1) We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

(2) O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving-kindness sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask You not to forsake Your children but always to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve You; through

Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

(3) Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the Day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now forever (Hymnal Supplement 98, p. 15).

In the first prayer listed above we pray to the Father who has just provided us with a salutary (saving) gift, the body and blood of his Son Jesus. We thank him for this gift and we ask him to use this same gift that saves us to strengthen us in our faith in Him and in our love towards others. These two requests summarize Christianity and the Ten Commandments. First and foremost, we hold God in the highest regard above all things and, secondly, the result of faith is love**. The Sacrament draws us outside of ourselves to live in Christ by faith and in the neighbor by love,** to paraphrase Luther. These requests are made, as all Christian prayer is, through Jesus, our Mediator with the Father. And the prayer ends affirming that the one true God is the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Triune God reigns over all things now and he will continue to reign forever.

In the second prayer, we address the Father and acknowledge him to be the source of all goodness. The greatest good of all was the Father's sending of his Son as a human-being. **The results of the Son's work that are made available to us in the Sacrament are pardon and peace. For this we thank the Father.** And having been made his children, it is our desire and we ask that **through the Holy Spirit, that he would rule in our hearts and our minds** in everything we do that we might constantly serve him. We give thanks and make these requests through Jesus and acknowledge that the Triune God is the one, true God now and forever.

In the third prayer, we pray to our heavenly Father. We acknowledge that the meal we have just received with all of its wonder gifts is but a foretaste of the grand and on-going feast in heaven. We look forward to the heavenly feast which will be fully received by all believers on the last day when Jesus comes again and **ask the Lord to keep us firm in our faith throughout our earthly pilgrimage so that we too can join the eternal feast.** This feast will be the marriage banquet where the slain but risen Lamb, the Groom, will be fully united with his bride, the church (all who believe in Jesus). We once again pray through Jesus and recognize the Triune God as the one, true God.

The third prayer speaks of how this meal gives us a glimpse of the heavenly reality. Here are a few of the parallels between the Lord's Supper and the on-going heavenly banquet.

- In heaven we will be in the immediate presence of the triune God. **In the Lord's Supper, Jesus is truly present**, giving us His true body and blood under the bread and wine.
- In heaven Jesus will be our host for all eternity. **In the Sacrament He is the Host who invites us to come to Him.** What's more, He's also the cook and the butler--and even the food!

- In heaven Jesus will grant us eternal life. **In the Lord's Supper our Lord grants us forgiveness.** And as the Small Catechism explains so well, "where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."

Whichever prayer we use, we pray to the Father thanking him for the gift of his only Son. And we pray that he would use this meal to strengthen us in the faith that we might live for him, remain faithful to him, and participate in the eternal feast of the Lamb.

The Benediction

The Salutation and Benedicamus

In some settings of the Divine Service before the benediction, there is an exchange between the pastor and the congregation, called the Salutation and Benedicamus ("bless the Lord"). If the salutation is used here, this would be the third time it is used in the service. **Each time we use the salutation, as you will recall, we expect that God is about to impart to us a special gift. In this part of the service the gift will be given in the benediction.** In the salutation we once again acknowledge that God is with us. Then in the Benedicamus the pastor invites us to bless the Lord, by saying or chanting, "Bless we the Lord." This may seem a bit strange since we normally think of God blessing us and not the other way around. But this exchange between pastor and congregation comes from Ps. 103.

Ps 103 – Bless the Lord

1(A) Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!
2(B) Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and(C) forget not all his benefits,
3who(D) forgives all your iniquity,
who(E) heals all your diseases,
4who(F) redeems your life from the pit,
who(G) crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
5who(H) satisfies you with good
so that your youth is renewed like(I) the eagle's.

To "bless the LORD" is to speak well of him. When we bless the LORD, we acknowledge what good things God has done for us. Ps. 103:3-4, which summarizes God's saving actions for Israel, also summarizes God's saving actions for us very well. He forgives us; he heals us; he redeems us; and he gives us continuous love and mercy "without any merit or worthiness in me." Because God does all of this for us, we ought to bless the Lord, bless his holy name, and remember all he does for us. **So at this time we remember all that God has done for us in this Service and we give him thanks and praise for it.**

Benediction

The Benediction concludes the Divine Service. Benediction literally means "to speak well of" or "to speak good upon" and from that, we get its common meaning "to bless." So the **Benediction is the final blessing of the Divine Service**. The words of the Benediction that the pastor speaks or chants are as follows:

> *The LORD bless you and keep you. The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The LORD look upon you with favor and give you peace.*

The Benediction comes from Num. 6:22-27. Here God told Moses that the priests were to end the OT divine service by saying this blessing over the people of Israel. Why did God command that this be done? In verse 27 God explains why. The speaking of these words puts God's name upon the people and God says he will bless them. God's name cannot be separated from God himself. If God's name is placed upon someone then God is with that person. **Since God is good and gracious, wherever he is present with someone, he brings blessing to them.** Notice that God says whenever you speak these words over the people, "I will bless them." God absolutely promises to bless them.

> **Num 6 – The Aaronic Blessing**
> 22 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 23 "Speak to Aaron and his
> sons, saying, Thus(A) you shall bless the people of Israel: you
> shall say to them,
> 24 The LORD(B) bless you and(C) keep you; 25 the LORD(D) make his
> face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; 26 the LORD(E) lift
> up his countenance[a] upon you and give you peace.
>
> 27(F) "So shall they put my name upon the people of Israel, and I
> will bless them."

Whether the OT people of God (Israel) or the NT people of God (the **new Israel** of God – all who have faith in Jesus), **God is with his people and God promises to bless his people.** So the words spoken by the priests upon the people in the OT divine service can also be spoken to the NT people of God. God's promise to be with them and bless them holds for them too.

Another reason that these words are most appropriate for the NT Divine Service is that it is **a reminder and reenactment of Jesus blessing his disciples** when he ascended into heaven (Luke 24:50-51). Through the pastor God blesses his people. As the pastor says the blessing, he raises his arms to his side to the same position that Jesus held upon the cross. It is **a visual reminder then that all of God's blessings flow from the crucified Christ.** God told man in the Garden that if he sinned he would die; that is the threat of the law that we have and cannot overcome. But the blessing ("The LORD bless you and keep you") has God doing what we cannot do, preserving us because He destroyed Christ instead of us. God frowned on us because of sin, but the blessing has God smiling on us ("the LORD make his face to

shine upon you and be gracious to you") in Christ. God turned His face down away from us in disgust over our lack of holiness, and the blessing has Him gazing at us with open arms ("the LORD lift up his countenance upon you"). We were His enemy, but now in Christ He gives us peace. Amen. Amen. Amen! **The closing blessing is pure Gospel.**

As the pastor pronounces the Benediction, he makes the **sign of the cross**. **This is a final reminder that this blessing of protection, grace, and peace with which we leave is ours only through the atoning death of Christ.** In fact all the blessings we receive are always given to us out of grace because of what Christ has done for us.

Lk 24 – Jesus' Ascension

50 Then[F] he led them out as far as[G] Bethany, and lifting up his
hands he blessed them. 51 While he blessed them,[H] he parted
from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they[I]
worshiped him and[J] returned to Jerusalem[K] with great joy,
53 and[L] were continually in the temple[M] blessing God.

The Aaronic Benediction has not always been part of the Divine Service. It was Martin Luther who first brought the Aaronic blessing into the Divine Service. And it is most often used in the worship services of Lutheran congregations. Lutherans feel that this blessing is a most appropriate way to end the Service. It answers several important questions that we have as sinners and it gives great assurance. What is God's will toward the church? What is His disposition towards me personally? **The Benediction tells me that the heart of God is to prosper and bless His people** through a relationship with the Almighty. There it is sinner: God's disposition towards you in Christ is most pleasant. **God speaks to you, the individual, in these words.** In the Hebrew of Numbers 6, in the German and Jacobean English of our former hymnals, this is made clearer by the language used – "The LORD bless thee (you-singular) and keep thee (you-singular)." In contrast to the general words of absolution spoken over the congregation (where "you" is plural) at the beginning of the service, these words of benediction spoken over the entire group are spoken to you (singular). Having received the Body and Blood given and shed "for you (plural)," the blessing of the shed Blood of the Lamb is proclaimed to you (singular).

The Benediction also instructs us as to the **source of our well being**. Three times over it is the LORD (YHWH) that speaks. Three blessings are given in emphasis. The New Testament further reveals that three persons come to bless us — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus, **as we started the service with the Invocation of the Trinity, we depart in peace by the blessing of the same Trinity.**

As we said, the name of the Lord is the beginning and the end of the Divine Service**. We are now marked with the Lord's name in the Benediction** – that word of God's blessing from Numbers 6 in which He favors us with His grace and peace. With the Lord's name given us in Holy Baptism we were drawn together as the body of Christ. **Now with that same name, He sends us back into the world, to the places of our various callings to live by the mercy we have received as living sacrifices to the praise of His glory and the good of our neighbor.**

The Christian life also begins and ends with God's name. **When God places his name on us in Baptism and in the Benediction, he gives us Himself.** He is

with us wherever we go and whatever we do. And wherever He is He brings with Him all of the blessings that he desires to give. So we can leave his holy house in peace, knowing that we are not alone and knowing that **he favors us with his grace and peace**.

The congregation responds to the Benediction with a triple Amen. By doing so, we express our firm faith that through the forgiveness of sins, which we have received by God's grace through Jesus Christ, and which we have heard in the Absolution, Word, and Sermon, and which we have received in the Holy Meal, that we indeed have all the blessings promised in the Benediction, including peace with God.

Closing Hymn and Recessional

The Divine Service ends with a closing hymn and the recession of the cross. Our closing hymn one last time reflects the theme for the day. On those days it is used, as the recessional cross passes, we turn towards it and focus upon it. **We follow Christ as He leads us and goes with us back into the world.** As He guided us into God's holy presence in the Divine Service, so now He guides us back into the world. He is with us and guides us through out our earthly life and pilgrimage. In the end he will guide us safely to our heavenly home.

9. Divine Service Summary Outline

Preparation for the Divine Service

Prelude

- Sets the tone for the service
- Provides a time of meditation on God's Word

Processional Hymn or Hymn of Invocation

- Through the Crucifer, Christ leads the us into God's presence
- Hymn sung to the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- Usually related to the theme of the day or the church season

Invocation

- Invokes God's presence with us
- Confesses the one, true God, who is the Triune God
- Recalls our Baptism into Christ's death and resurrection
- Acknowledges that God created us and re-creates us as his own

Self-Examination, Confession, and Absolution

- An honest look at one's self in light of God's Law
- Confession of original and actual sin, of sins of commission and omission
- Admission of offenses against God and guilt before God
- Prayer to God for forgiveness, renewal, and guidance
- Announcement by the pastor of the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake

The Divine Service

The Service of the Word

Introit

- Enter God's presence with praise and thanksgiving.
- Proclaims the significance of the day

Kyrie

- Come to Jesus with nothing to offer, as beggars
- A cry to Jesus for mercy
- A confession that Jesus is present to meet our needs
- Reaching out with the open hands of faith ready to receive the Lord's gifts
- Our posture for the Divine Service and for life

Hymn of Praise

- God's answer to our cry for mercy is Jesus
- The Son became man in order to win victory over our enemies
- ❖ The Gloria
  - God the Son came to this world and became incarnate
  - Jesus came to reconcile heaven and earth
  - We join the angels and departed saints in giving glory to God
  - Jesus brings peace and goodwill.

- This Is the Feast
  - Jesus is the Lamb who was slain to set us free
  - Through his death Jesus won victory over our enemies
  - His victory is celebrated with an unending feast
  - Our response is Alleluia – Praise the Lord

Salutation and Collect

- **Salutation**
  - Alerts to an important action coming – the reading of God Word
  - Relationship between pastor and people in the Holy Spirit
  - Blessing and confession that God is present with us.
- **Collect**
  - "Collects" into one short petition all that we are asking God to do for us on the basis of God's Word about to be read.
  - Request made based on an attribute or action of God.

The Reading of God's Word

- The Bible is God's Word; God is the author of the Bible.
- The primary purpose of the Bible is to reveal God's salvation in Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit uses God's Word to create and strengthen faith.
- God's Word is powerful and creative.
- God's Word is a means of grace.
- **The OT Lesson**
  - Jesus is the Fulfillment of all OT prophecies.
  - The OT reveals the coming Christ.
  - The Holy Spirit caused the prophets to record God's Word.
  - God speaks to us today through the OT.
- **Gradual**
  - Reflects the theme of the day of church season.
  - A bridge of praise that connects OT and NT in Christ.
- **The Epistle Lesson**
  - A letter written by one of Jesus' apostles.
  - Emphasizes the Lord's work through the apostles in the early church.
  - Explains the truths of God's Word and its effect on people's faith and life.
- **The Alleluia Verse**
  - We sing alleluia, "Praise the Lord," as we look forward with great anticipation to the reading of the Gospel.
  - Confess Jesus as Lord and his words are eternal life.
  - During Lent it is omitted as we focus on Jesus suffering and death. May instead focus on the repentance God works in us.
- **The Gospel Lesson**
  - The chief reading because in it our Savior speaks to us.
  - Recognize Jesus' presence and words by surrounding them with acclamations of glory and praise.
  - Focuses on Jesus and what he did for our salvation.

The Hymn of the Day

- The main hymn of the day.
- Restates the gospel or other readings in song.
- Stresses the theme of the day.

The Creed

- “I believe” -Statement of personal and corporate faith.
- Orthodox statement of faith, of the truths God has revealed.
- Our witness to the world of what we as Christians believe.
- Teaches converts in preparation for Baptism.
- States clearly a belief in the Triune God-one God, three persons.
- A short summary of what God has revealed about himself.

The Sermon

- The pastor is God’s mouth to the congregation as he speaks God’s Word.
- The pastor speaks words of law and gospel.
- Every sermon centers on Jesus Christ and his saving act on the cross.
- Explains God’s Word and its application to our lives.

The Offering and Offertory

- Offerings are given out of gratitude and thanksgiving.
- As holy priests we use our access to God to bring others and their needs before Him.
- We give the first and best to further the kingdom and to benefit others.
- We give our money (Offering), ourselves (Offertory), and our intercession (Prayers).
    - ❖ **The Offering**
        - We give to support the work of the church, the proclamation of the Gospel.
        - Shows faith in God’s provision and thankfulness for His gifts.
    - ❖ **The Offertory**
        - Only God can create a clean heart and right spirit in us.
        - A sacrifice of ourselves given in song.
        - A turning again to God to cleanse us and make us right.
        - A clean heart and right spirit cause us to want to desire to be in God’s presence (Holy Communion).
        - We cannot repay God; we can only receive God’s salvation and call upon Him and worship Him with God’s people.

The Prayer of the Church

- As priests we bring others and their needs before God and we bring God’s blessings to them.
- Prayer grows out of our faith and relationship with God, which is created and sustained by the Holy Spirit through the Word.
- We pray for the world, the church, and anyone in need.
- We pray for the proclamation and reception of the Gospel.

The Service of Holy Communion

The Preface

- Starts with the salutation which alerts us that God is with us and is about to about to give out his gracious gifts in Holy Communion.
- We give our hearts to God that he may heal them and make them receptive.
- As Jesus gave thanks before the Last Supper, so we give thanks before the Lord's Supper.
- Our thanksgiving is focused and guided by the Church Year.
- Acknowledges that we are about to join in with the angels and the saints in heaven in singing praise to God.

The Sanctus

- We join the angels in praising God as holy.
- We sinners cannot normally stand in God's holy presence, but since Jesus has come to save us, we have no fear of doing so.
- We recognize that Jesus is present in the Sacrament to save us.
- We sing these words to Jesus, recognizing him as the holy God.

The Pre-Communion Prayer

- Prayer of thanksgiving for the food we are about to receive.
- ❖ **The Lord's Prayer**
  - The family of God prays a table prayer before the Holy Meal.
  - The answer to each petition is the "Yes!" provided in the Meal.
  - We address our Father by using the prayer that Jesus taught us. Jesus is always the Mediator who connects us to the Father.
- ❖ **The Eucharistic Prayer**
  - Gives thanks for the redemption secured for us.
  - Asks that He might prepare us to receive His redemption.
  - Teaches us about what God is doing for us: mercy, redemption, gathering us, and providing a joyous feast.

The Words of Institution

- Jesus speaks to us. Jesus is bodily present with us.
- His powerful Word makes his body present in the bread and his blood present in the wine.
- A reading of Jesus' last will and testament in which he gives life, peace, and forgiveness.
- Not our sacrifice to God, but his gift to us.
- We eat the Holy Meal often (every Sunday) to nourish our souls.

The Peace

- The peace of the Lord comes through Jesus' body and blood.
- Peace is a healthy and whole body and soul.
- Jesus speaks his peace to us and we receive it by faith.
- Full peace, with God and with others; complete unity.

The Angus Dei (The Lamb of God)

- Focus on Christ and what he has done.
- John recognized and called Jesus the Lamb of God. So do we.
- Jesus is the one-time, substitutionary, atoning sacrifice.
- A recognition that the Lamb, Jesus, is present in the bread and wine.
- We are beggars who come before God with the open hands of faith ready to receive his gifts.

The Communion Distribution

- Focus is on God's action "for you".
- Jesus comes personally to give us his gifts.
- We believe Jesus' Word, this is his body and his blood willingly given "for the forgiveness of your sins".
- Communion preserves and strengthens faith.
- Faith receives the gifts that Jesus offers.

Post-Communion Canticle

- The Nunc Dimmittis
  - Simeon's song of when he held the infant Christ child, the long promised Savior becomes our song.
  - We have been led by the Holy Spirit to receive the Savior in the Sacrament we have just received.
  - We can depart in peace because we have all we need in Christ.
- Thank the Lord
  - A song of thanksgiving for all that God has done for us.
  - In the Sacrament we recognize that our Deliverer has come to us, released us from bondage to sin, and strengthened us for our journey to the heavenly promised land.
  - In response to all that God has done for us we tell others, sing his praise, rejoice, and proudly bear the name of the Triune God.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

- Give thanks because of God's steadfast love received in the Meal.
- Prayer to the Father for the saving and good gift just received.
- Ask that the result of the Meal be stronger faith in God and a more fervent love toward others (a summary of the Christian faith).
- Ask that as his children the Holy Spirit would rule in our lives.
- Recognize that this Meal is but a small foretaste of the eternal Feast that is to come.

Benediction

- Salutation and Benedicamus
  - Salutation tells us a special gift is coming.
  - We bless the Lord for the forgiveness, healing, redemption, love and mercy he has freely given us.

- Benediction
  - God’s name is placed upon us and he absolutely promises to bless us.
  - Pastor raises his arms reminding us that all blessings come through the crucified Christ.
  - God destroyed Christ on the cross to “bless you and keep you”.
  - Sin causes God to frown, but Christ causes God “smile upon you and be gracious to you”.
  - Sin causes God to turn away from us in disgust, but Christ causes God to turn toward us welcoming us with open arms.
  - We go back into the world and our vocations with God and blessings.

Closing Hymn and Recessional

- Reflects the theme for the day or is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving.
- The recessional cross (Christ) leads us back into the world.

10. The Foci of the Divine Service

The order of service that we use in the Divine Service keeps our focus on the things that are most important. The liturgy keeps our focus on Jesus who gave his life for the forgiveness of our sins. The liturgy keeps our focus on the Triune God, who is the one and only true God, the One who created us, redeemed us, and makes us holy. And the liturgy keeps our focus on what God has done and still does for us in grace and then helps us to response to such grace. The foci of the Divine Service are summarized below.

Focus on Jesus Christ

> **Acts 10 – Believe in the Lord Jesus**
> 30 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs,[A] what must I do to be[B] saved?" 31 And they said,[C] "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you[D] and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

Paul resolved to know and speak nothing but Christ crucified (1 Cor 2:1-5) so that the faith of God's people would reside on and be strengthened by the wisdom and power of God. We do the same in the Divine Service. In it Christ is proclaimed from beginning to end in order that we might be believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

God the Father sent his one and only Son into the world to redeem and rescue humankind. God the Son came to the world, took on human flesh, and paid the penalty that we deserved. God the Holy Spirit reveals to us what the Son did and accomplished for us. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. God interacts with us through his Son. Jesus is the Mediator between us and the Father. For this reason then, the focus of the Divine Service must always be on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith.

God creates through the Word (Christ).
God saves through Christ.
God reveals himself in Christ.

Processional Hymn
In the procession all eyes are on **the cross (Christ)** that leads us into the Father's presence so that we may receive his gifts and worship him.

Confession
We end our confession of sins by saying, " … and I pray You, of Your boundless mercy, and **for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter suffering and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ**, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being." We beg God to forgive our sins because of what Jesus did for us. God's forgiveness is based upon Jesus' work of redemption.

Absolution
"Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, had had mercy upon us, and has **given His Only Son to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our sins**. To them that believe on His Name, He gives power to become the children of God, and bestows

upon them His Holy Spirit. He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved. Grant this, O Lord, unto us all." Absolution is only possible because of what Jesus has done for us. The Father forgives us because of Jesus.

Kyrie
Jesus is our intercessor and advocate. So in the Kyrie we come before the risen Lord Jesus as beggars pleading for mercy. And so in the Kyrie we address him with **"Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy."**

Hymn of Praise
The hymn of praise is a song about Jesus Christ. We use either the Gloria, which speaks of **Jesus' incarnational birth**, or This is the Feast, which speaks of **Christ's elevation** to the right hand of God.

Salutation
The salutation of "**the Lord** be with you", is a confession that Jesus is the Lord and he is present now; he is Immanuel, God with us.

Old Testament Lesson
The OT lesson usually correlates with the NT lesson. This is because Moses and the Prophets **inform us about Jesus Christ**.

Epistle Lesson
Jesus' apostles write letters to Christians about their **faith and life in Christ**.

Alleluia Verse
"Alleluia, **Lord** to whom shall we go, You have the words of eternal life, Alleluia." These are Peter's words to Jesus. We speak to Jesus with the same words.

Gospel Lesson
The Gospel lesson is always about the life, death, or resurrection of **Jesus**.

Hymn of the Day
All hymns have references to **Christ**.

The Creed
No matter which creed we use, the largest portion of it (the second article) is about **Jesus** and his work of salvation.

Sermon
The sermon is always dominated by the Gospel, the Good News of what **Christ** has done for us. In every sermon the pastor should "preach nothing but **Jesus Christ** and him crucified."

The Offering, Offertory, and the Prayers
As priests, we follow the example of our High Priest, **Jesus**. As he offered himself and his work to the Father and interceded for others, so we offer ourselves, our work, and our prayers to the Father for the benefit of others and we do it **in the name of Jesus**.

The Preface
Thanksgiving is always given to God the Father through our **Lord Jesus Christ**.

The Sanctus

In the Sanctus, we recognize **Jesus** as Holy God and as the One who comes to us now in the bread and wine to save us.

The Pre-Communion Prayer or Lord's Prayer
The answer to every petition of the Lord's prayer is found in the body and blood of **Jesus** which we are about to receive. We pray that we will **receive Christ** and the gifts that he offers.

The Words of Institution
Jesus himself speaks to us and tells us "This is body given for you. This is my blood shed for you."

The Peace
We find peace in **Jesus**, as we receive him in the Supper.

The Agnes Dei
Jesus is the **Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world and grants us peace.

The Communion Distribution
We receive the very **body and blood of Jesus**.

The Post-Communion Canticle
In song, we thank God for what he has done in sending his only **Son** for us.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving
In prayer, We thank God for the saving gift we have just received, the body and blood of **Jesus**.

The Benediction
God's blessing is upon us only because **Jesus** has reversed the effects of sin.

Focus on the Triune God

Hymns
Many hymns have verses praising or recounting the works of the **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,** the Triune God.

Invocation
"We begin the name of **the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit**. Amen." The Triune God is the God we believe and trust in. In this Service we come into his presence to receive his gifts and praise him.

Absolution
"Upon this, your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**. Amen." The Father sends the Son. The Son dies and rises for our sins. The Holy Spirit brings us the Good News that our sins have been forgiven.

Introit

Each psalm sung in the introit includes the doxology "**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit**. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen." We praise the Triune God for his Word.

Kyrie
When we sing the Kyrie, "**Lord** [the Father] have mercy; **Christ** [the Son] have mercy; **Lord** [the Holy Spirit] have mercy," we asking the Triune God to have mercy on us.

Hymn of Praise
The *Gloria in Excelsis* ends by saying that Jesus is the Most High along with the Holy Spirit and the Father: "Thou only, **O Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art Most High in the glory of God the Father**. Amen." We praise the Triune God for his act of salvation for the world. The triple "alleluia" at the end of *This Is the Feast* also reminds us the Triune God.

Collect
The Collect ends with: "through **Jesus Christ**, our Lord, who lives and reigns with **You and the Holy Spirit**, one God, now and forever." The collect always ends with a doxology to the Triune God.

Alleluia Verse
"**Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**" The triple alleluia is again praise to the Triune God.

The Creed
- The Nicene Creed: "I believe in one God, **the Father** Almighty … And in one Lord, **Jesus Christ** … And I believe in **the Holy Spirit** …"
- The Apostle's Creed: "I believe in **God, the Father** Almighty … and in **Jesus Christ** … I believe in **the Holy Spirit**, …"

In the creed we clearly state our belief that there is only one true God who is the Triune God, three persons in one God.

The Sermon
In the sermon the pastor spells out that **the Father** sends the Son for us, that **the Son** willingly comes to die for us and that **the Holy Spirit** brings us the Good News.

The Prayer of the Church
We pray to the Triune God and we typically end the prayers with a reference to the Triune God such as this: Through **Him**, with Him and in Him, in the unity of **the Holy Spirit**, all glory and honor is Yours, **Almighty Father**, forever and ever. Amen.

Sanctus
The three-fold "**Holy, holy, holy**" reminds us that it is the Triune God who is holy, powerful and glorious.

Pre-Communion Prayer
The pre-communion prayer usually ends with a reference to the Triune God such as: "To You alone, O **Father**, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the **Son** and the **Holy Spirit**, one God, now and forever. Amen"

Communion

In communion we receive the very body and blood of **the Son** who was sent by the **Father**. We know this because the **Holy Spirit** gives us the faith in this sacrament to know it and believe it and to receive it.

Post-Communion Canticle
The Nunc Dimittis ends with the doxology: “Glory be to the **Father** and to the **Son** and to the **Holy Spirit**…” The salvation we have seen, touched, and ate comes from the Triune God.

Post Communion Prayer
This prayer ends with a reference to all three persons of the holy Trinity: “through **Jesus Christ**, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns **with You** and **the Holy Spirit**, one God, now and forever.” We are thankful that the Triune God has provided us with this saving meal.

Benediction
“**The Lord** bless you and keep you! **The Lord** make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you! **The Lord** lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace! Amen! Amen! Amen!” The triple use of “the Lord” is a reference to the Triune God.

Focus on The Gospel (The Good News of God’s Actions for Us)

Processional Hymn
The focus of most hymns is on **what God has done for us** in Jesus Christ.

Confession
We openly confess our sins and ask for forgiveness for Jesus’ sake. If it were not for Jesus’ death and resurrection, there would be no forgiveness. So we ask for **God’s mercy** “**for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ**”.

Absolution
“Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us, and has **given His Only Son to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our sins**. To them that believe on His Name, He gives power to become the children of God, and bestows upon them His Holy Spirit. He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved. Grant this, O Lord, unto us all.” Absolution is only possible because of what Jesus has done for us. The Father forgives us because of Jesus. That’s great news!

Kyrie
Jesus identifies with our perilous situation. That’s why he came as our substitute. And so in the Kyrie we cry out to him as beggars, knowing **he can and will help us**.

Hymn of Praise
The hymn of praise is all about Jesus’ birth or his victory over all of our enemies. **He came down from heaven to win the victory for us** – all Good News.

Salutation
The salutation of “the Lord be with you”, is a confession that Jesus is the Lord and **he is with us**.

Collect

The collect is a prayer where we ask God to do something for us. What we ask him to do is **based on upon who he is and what he does**.

Old Testament Lesson
The OT lesson **points us to the Savior** of the world.

Epistle Lesson
Jesus' apostles wrote letters that tell us how the **Gospel motivates us to live** as Christians.

Alleluia Verse
"Alleluia, Lord to whom shall we go, **You have the words of eternal** life, Alleluia." These are Peter's words to Jesus. We speak to Jesus with the same words.

Gospel Lesson
The Gospel lesson is always about **the life, death, or resurrection of Jesus, our Savior.**

Hymn of the Day
The hymn of the day usually focuses on the **primary Gospel theme** of the day, on what God is doing for us.

The Creed
The creed always says that God sent his Son, that the Son suffered, died, and rose again, and that the Holy Spirit reveals this Good News to us. All three persons of the Trinity are part of the Gospel story. **The creed is a summary of the Gospel**.

Sermon
The sermon is always **dominated by** the Gospel**, the Good News of what Christ has done for us.** In every sermon the pastor should "preach nothing but **Jesus Christ and him crucified**."

The Offering, Offertory, and the Prayers
As priests, we follow the example of our High Priest, Jesus. As he offered himself and his work to the Father and interceded for others, so we offer ourselves, our work, and our prayers to the Father for the benefit of others and we do it in the name of Jesus. This is our **response to the Gospel, to all that God does for us**.

The Preface
We thank God for the **saving gift** we are about to receive.

The Sanctus
In the Sanctus, we recognize Jesus as Holy God and as the One who **comes to us now** in the bread and wine **to save us**.

The Pre-Communion Prayer or Lord's Prayer
The answer to every petition of the Lord's Prayer is found in the body and blood of Jesus which we are about to receive. We **look forward to the saving Meal** we are about to receive.

The Words of Institution
Jesus himself **speaks to us** and tells us "This is body given for you. This is my blood shed for you." What Good News it is that **he gave himself "for you".**

The Peace

As we receive him in the Supper **he give us peace**.

The Agnes Dei
Jesus is the Lamb of God who **takes away the sin of the world and grants us peace**.

The Communion Distribution
We receive the very body and blood of Jesus **for the forgiveness of our sins**.

The Post-Communion Canticle
We thank God for what he has done in **sending his only Son for us and giving us the forgiveness** that he won on the cross.

The Prayer of Thanksgiving
We thank God for **the saving gift** we have just received, the body and blood of Jesus.

The Benediction
God's blessing is upon us only because Jesus has reversed the effects of sin.

11. Conclusion

In summary then**, the Divine Service is the service in which God comes to us bearing gifts.** He brings his gifts of forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life. But our natural, sinful selves have no way to receive his gifts. So God also gives us faith. And **in the Divine Service we receive the gracious gifts from God by faith.** In the Divine Service God offers his gifts in the Gospel. The Gospel is read and proclaimed in God's Word and enacted in the Sacraments. The Gospel is "the power of God for salvation." That power is unleashed in the Divine Service. Without it, sinful man has no hope.

The Divine Service is not a service dreamed up or planned by someone. **The Divine Service is based upon the pattern of the OT divine service**. The OT divine service was laid out specifically by God himself. The pattern he laid out includes a substitutionary sacrifice and blood atonement, which resulted in a God-pleasing, sweet-smelling smoke and a sacred meal. In the NT Jesus was sacrificed on the cross. He was our substitute, paying the price for our sins. He shed his blood on the cross to make atonement for all sinful human beings. The results of Jesus' one-time sacrifice were pleasing to God. The results of his sacrifice are made known in the Gospel. This is why the Gospel is read and proclaimed in the Service of the Word. Jesus' sacrifice also leads to a sacred meal, the Lord's Supper. In it Jesus serves holy food, which is his holy body and blood. **The Divine Service follows the pattern of the OT divine service**, which was held at the tabernacle and later at the temple.

By the time of the NT, Israelites met weekly at their local synagogues (churches) to hear God's Word read and preached. They also continued to offer sacrifices daily at the temple in Jerusalem. We also see that Jesus accepted these forms of worship as he regularly went to the synagogue and as he went to the Temple whenever he was in Jerusalem. So, **worship for Jesus revolved around God's Word and the sacrificial system that God designed.**

It is also clear that Jesus' ministry defined the Divine Service as well. In Jesus' ministry there was a close connection between his teaching and miracles and between his teaching and eating with sinners. We see many examples of Jesus teaching and then performing miracles. The same pattern holds true in the Divine Service. There Jesus teaches us with his Word in the Service of the Word and he performs the miracle of giving his body and blood in, with, and under the disguise of bread and wine. In Scripture we also see many clear examples of Jesus teaching and eating with sinners. In the Divine Service the same thing happens. As we said, Jesus teaches us with his Word and then he provides a meal for us sinners. Jesus' ministry did not end when he ascended into heaven. **He continues his ministry even now through his church, teaching, performing miracles, and eating with sinners.**

We also know that God is a God of order. When he created the world he created order in our days, weeks, and years. He created order in our societies. **The Divine Service provides us with an order through which we can worship God.** It gives us the essential elements of what a relationship with God entails. In it God uses simple ways that he has chosen to come to us and restore us back to himself. **God uses this order to focus us on what we need and on what is important.** In the Divine Service he teaches us who he is, who we are, our sinful condition, what he has done for us, and how we can receive his gracious gifts. He teaches us the whole council of

God from Scripture, as the pastor is not free to choose only what he wants to focus on. The Divine Service provides this order to all people in all countries and in all languages. It is transcultural; it applies to all people everywhere.

God has created us so that we communicate through our senses. So it makes sense then that **God would communicate his love for us through our senses and he does so in the Divine Service**. The Service and the church that it is held in use all kinds of symbols and colors to communicate God's love. Our postures and those of the pastor communicate important truths to us. The physical layout of the church also informs us about God. The songs we sing and the chanting and spoken discourse do the same. God not only communicates through what we see and hear, but also through our taste and touch in the Lord's Supper. God takes advantage of the way he designed us to come to us and to inform us of what he has done for us, and to give us his saving gifts.

Before the Service begins we have a time of preparation, which is called the Service of Preparation. This helps us focus on what is important. We focus on God, his Word, and the theme for the day. We focus on God's presence with us and recall how we became part of God's family in Baptism. Baptism calls for a life of daily dying to sin and rising to new life through the power of the Holy Spirit. So it is only natural that we confess our sins in the presence of God and each other. **In confession we die to our sins. In the absolution pronounced by the pastor we then experience the rising to new life**, as our old sinful baggage is taken away and dumped at the foot of the cross. Now we are ready to begin the Service of the Word. We are anxious to hear and receive God's Word for us.

This leads us into the Divine Service proper. It begins with **the Service of the Word**. Obviously God's Word is the focus of this part of the service. God's Word is read in the three readings (OT, Epistle, and Gospel) and preached in the sermon. It is sung in the Hymn of the Day and it is summarized in the Creed. And the Word elicits a response from us in the offering (our work), offertory (ourselves), and prayers (our words). **God's Word is alive and active. It convicts and kills (Law) and it raises up and gives life** (Gospel). This is what we need. We need our sinful self killed off. It can't be reformed; it can't be improved; it must be done away with and God does that for us. In its place God raises up a new person, a person who loves God and a person who loves his neighbor. God's Word makes and fulfills promises through Jesus. God's Word also creates and strengthens faith. Faith then holds on to God's promises and never lets go.

The second major part of the Divine Service is **the Service of the Sacrament**. The sacrament is the Lord's Supper. In it Jesus comes to us and prepares a holy meal, which consists of his crucified and risen body and blood. He then serves that meal to us**. In the meal of his body and blood we receive life, health, and salvation.** We gladly come to his table and humbly receive the gifts he offers. When we do, we join the unending, heavenly feast. We join angelic hosts of heaven, the saints departed who are already in heaven, and Christians all over the world. This is the feast of Lamb who was once slain, but who is now alive and rules with the Father over all things. Before and after the Supper we thank God for this precious meal. As we leave his table and his house, we go forth with God's blessing and with his Name. We go back into the world and work at the vocations God has placed us in. Knowing he is with us and his Spirit is guiding us, we live providing salt and light to the world around us.

After explaining the Divine Service, we listed each part of it and the most important points about each. This could be used as **a quick reference guide** to the Divine Service.

And lastly, we showed **the most important things that the Divine Service focuses us on**. First, **the Divine Service focuses us on Jesus Christ** and his death and resurrection. God the Father sent God the Son to the world to reconcile the world back to himself. Without Jesus we have no hope and so we must focus on Jesus. It is Jesus who leads us into worship, speaks to us in his Word, serves us a holy meal, and who leads us back into the world. Second**, the Divine Service focuses us on the Triune God**. There is only one, true, living God and that is the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Throughout the Divine Service we acknowledge this truth and we acknowledge that he has stooped down to be with us, to meet with us, and to give us his gracious gifts. And third, **the Divine Service focuses us on the Gospel**, the Good News of what God does for us in Christ. God the Father gave his only Son for us. God the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus as the Savior. Through Christ we have forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and peace.

I pray that the Divine Service now makes more sense to you, and that it is clear that in it God comes to us and gives us his gifts. We don't deserve them, but for Christ's sake he has mercy on us. In the Divine Service he gives us what we need most-the forgiveness of sins. Having received his gifts by faith, we can be sure that we will continue to celebrate the never-ending Feast of the Lamb into all eternity.

12. Internet Resource on the Divine Service

Website of the OT Liturgy

http://www.ctsfw.net/media/pdfs/LudwigLiturgicalShapeoftheOTGospel.pdf - An article in the Concordia Theological Quarterly, volume 73:2, April 2009, by Alan Ludwig. Argues that the Divine Service was used by God to deal with sinful people from the very beginning.

Websites that give a general overview of the Divine Service

http://www.christrochester.org/documents/guide-liturgy.pdf - A Guide to the Divine Service.

http://www.frontiernet.net/~zionstpe/sermonarchive/2005-06-19.htm - A Narration of the Divine Service

http://www.stpaullutheranchurchhamel.org/LiturgyoftheDevineService.html - The actual words of the Divine Service as used at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Hamel.

http://www.goodshepherdmankato.org/worship/liturgyparts/divinecommentary/index.html - Divine Service Commentary from Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd.

http://www.answers.com/topic/divine-service-1 The Divine Service from Wikepedia.

http://homepage.mac.com/gurban/liturgy_lectionary/lutheran_worship.pdf Lutheran Worship.

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